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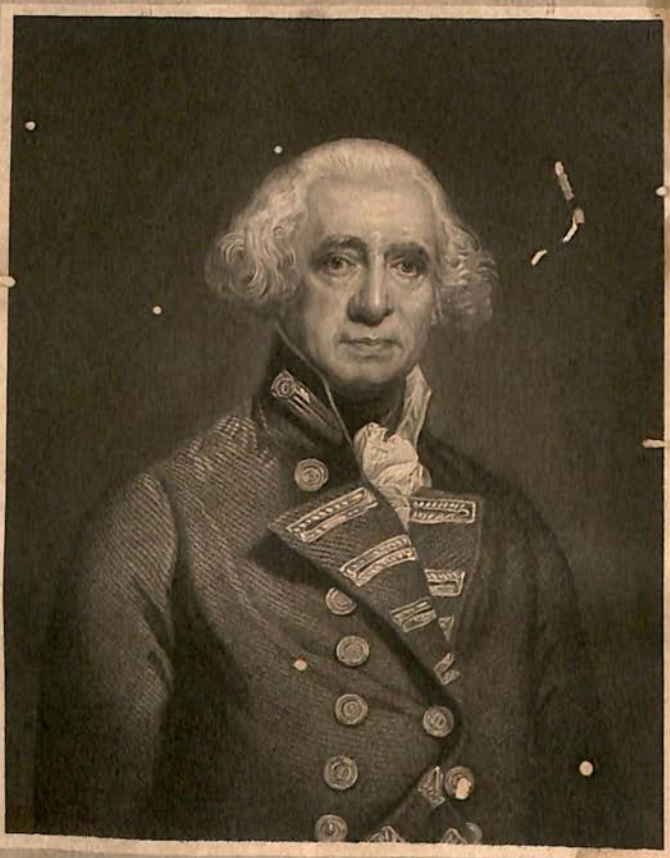

ADMIRAL EARL HOWE

Anno Ætat. 69.

London. Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street. 1837.

THE LIFE

OF

RICHARD EARL HOWE, K.G.,

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET, AND
GENERAL OF MARINES.

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SIR JOHN BARROW, BART., F.R.S.

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PREFACE.

It may appear remarkable enough that, amidst the profusion of publications which annually issue from the press, the biography of such a man as Lord Howe, whose whole life was devoted to the service of his country (civil and military), without interruption, for more than sixty years, should not have found a place among them. No Life, however, of Admiral Lord Howe has yet been published. We have Memoirs, and Sketches, and Scraps, in which many of his brilliant exploits and professional services have been briefly noticed, mostly from official documents, rarely from private sources, yet nothing whatever relating to his private character or opinions, either from himself or any part of his family: but these brief memoirs afford no record of his many acquirements, great virtues, and moral excellence as a member of society. No blame attaches to the writers of such desultory pieces for these omissions. They were in the same position as the Israelites in Egypt—unable to make bricks

without straw—they had few materials for the task, beyond the dry narratives of the Gazettes, and not always them, and the equally dry official letters on service.

Under these circumstances it may not unreasonably be asked, what new materials are now put forward?—how happens it, considering the number of naval officers who write naval novels, and works on professional subjects (and many of whom write well), that a landsman should undertake the history of one of the most distinguished admirals of the British navy?—and lastly, what is the extent of his acquaintance with naval matters? Without demurring to the right of these, or any such questions, being put, which the perusal of the work itself would best satisfy, there can be no objection to answer them briefly at once.

To the first, and indeed the only question of importance, it is answered, that the fresh materials consist of something more than four hundred letters, all in the hand-writing of Earl Howe, and all addressed to one individual, long and high in his confidence, embracing a period between the years 1776 and 1799, on a great variety of subjects, professional and otherwise;—of several private letters to and from the Earl of Chatham;—of the

Noble Admiral's private Journal during the time his flag was up, very full, and written entirely by himself;—of various communications received from several flag-officers and others, who served under him, and now living;—and of a few very interesting letters from his Majesty George III., and George Prince of Wales, to a member of the Howe family.

With regard to the second question: if our naval writers of novels and romances, in humble imitation of a celebrated novelist of former days, when the navy no more resembled the navy now, than their humour does that of Smollett, had not been so wholly taken up in their works of fancy and imagination—some of them tending to degrade rather than exalt the naval character—instead of applying themselves to naval biography, in which there is ample scope, the landsman would in all probability have left the task to one of the profession.

And lastly, if traversing the Atlantic to the 80th degree of north latitude—to the 40th degree of south latitude; and the Eastern Ocean to the 40th degree of north latitude; crossing in these passages the Equinoctial line six times—may not have converted the landsman into a seaman, yet they may be assumed as having afforded him the means

of knowing something of a ship and of what belongs to the naval service; added to which, a servitude of nearly thirty-three years in the Admiralty is not likely to have diminished that knowledge; but he has not troubled himself nor the reader much with naval tactics and naval discipline.

It was the possession of the materials above mentioned, together with the official documents to which I had access, and many of which are now for the first time made public, that induced me to undertake the "Life of Lord Howe," from whose distinguished and honourable character the rising officers of the British navy, and its future heroes, may take an useful example—a better they cannot follow—in all the branches of the naval service. I have made such free use of Lord Howe's letters and Journal, containing his own account of his acts, and his opinions and sentiments in his own words, on a variety of subjects, mostly professional, that a considerable portion of the latter part of the narrative may almost be considered as autobiographical; but unfortunately the younger part of his life affords no such valuable materials.

If I entertained doubts of engaging in the task, which I certainly did from the want of all private correspondence with or from the Noble Earl, that

could throw any light on his moral character, his opinions or sentiments, previous to his arriving at his flag, those doubts at once gave way to the flattering approbation, and the expression of a desire on the part of his late Majesty, that I should undertake it. His commands on this occasion were personally conveyed to me only a few days before the commencement, or rather indication, of the fatal illness which deprived the nation of a Sovereign eagerly devoted to its honour and its interests —of a Prince punctual in the discharge of his public duties, easy of access, and always ready to oblige, and to do a good-natured act—of a Man kind-hearted, amiable, and affectionate in all the relations of private and domestic life.

His Majesty was pleased to say that, having understood I was about to employ myself in writing the Life of the late Lord Howe, he was glad to hear it was likely to fall into such safe hands, for the Admiral was a great favourite with his father, and indeed a sort of connexion of the family; that he knew the present Earl had for some time past been desirous of finding some one qualified to write the life of his grandfather, and ought to consider himself fortunate. . . . . The King then entered into the history of Lord Howe's life,

went over the leading features and events that distinguished it, which an extraordinary memory enabled him to do with a degree of correctness quite surprising; he pointed out some passages in the Earl's life, not generally known, and which he said would require caution in touching upon, and that he was desirous of mentioning them to me. Though this interview, with which I was honoured, happened on the Sunday immediately preceding the last levee he ever held, I could not discover, on that day, any difference from his usual cheerfulness, manner, or appearance.

The great deficiency in the correspondence and papers of the Howe family is thus accounted for:—A chest of papers, after the death of the Earl, and another at the decease of his sister, Mrs. Howe, came into the possession of the youngest daughter, Louisa Catherine Marchioness of Sligo, as the executrix of both. The present Marquis had them sent to his seat at Westport, in Ireland, where, in consequence of a fire which broke out and destroyed many things in the library, it is supposed these papers shared the same fate. The Marquis has caused every search to be made for them, but without success. From the circumstance of Lord Howe having written so great a

number of letters to one individual, commencing towards the latter part of his life, and from the character of the Honourable Mrs. Howe, universally known to the fashionable and literary portion of the society of London, there cannot be a doubt that a large mass of curious and valuable correspondence must have been destroyed; but it can be as little doubted that much still remains in the possession of individuals.

Biographers are generally found to be panegyrists; some there are, however, who undertake to write a life for the savage pleasure of tearing it in pieces. I have no motive nor influence whatever to sway me in either category. I have conscientiously praised Lord Howe; truth and justice demanded it at my hands—truth, after a careful revision of the record of his acts, and a fair estimate of his professional and moral character—and justice, that the memory of their spotless author and possessor should not altogether perish.

It remains only for me to express thus publicly my acknowledgments to those from whom I have received valuable assistance, and in an especial manner to Captain Lord Radstock, for the unwearied pains he kindly took in procuring, and endeavouring to procure, all the information and

materials that could be had in the most likely quarters; and to Captain Sir Lucius Curtis for the full permission he liberally gave me to make use of the valuable collection of letters addressed by the Earl to his late father, Sir Roger Curtis. I wish also to acknowledge, with thanks, the obligation I feel myself under to Admiral Sir Robert Stopford and Admiral Sir Robert Barlow, who most readily (Sir R. Stopford voluntarily) gave me such information as, from their having commanded frigates in the battle of the 1st of June, and enjoyed the friendship of the Noble Earl, they were able to give. I received, also, communications from several other flag-officers who served as lieutenants in the same battle; of the flag-officers none remain; and of the captains who received medals not one is left. In conclusion, I cannot omit rendering the thanks that I feel to be due to Henry Bedford, Esq., Keeper of the Admiralty Records, by whose valuable assistance much time, and a great deal of the tedious labour of research, have been spared to me.

JOHN BARROW.

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DIRECTIONS FOR THE BINDER.

Portrait of Lord Howe to *face Title.*
Fac-simile of a letter of George III., p. 1.
Fac-simile of a letter of Lord Howe, p. 147

Windsor June 11th 1794.

My Lord Howe's Zeal for the great cause in which this Country is engaged added to Her becoming ardour for the Glory of Her Family must make Her feel with redoubled Joy the glorious news brought by Sir Roger Curtis, She will hope to be satisfied soon that Lord Richard has with 25. Sail of the Line attacked 26. of the Enemy taken Six and Sunk two; besides it is not improbable that some of the disabled Ships of the Enemy may not be able to reach their own Shore. Mrs Howe would not refrain from expressing my Sentiments on the occasion but will not detain Her by adding more.

George R.

THE LIFE

OF

ADMIRAL EARL HOWE.

CHAPTER I.

ADVANCEMENT IN THE NAVY.

Genealogy of the Howe family—Richard Howe sent to Eton—thence to sea—Destined for the South Seas with Commodore Anson—Goes to the West Indies under Sir Charles Knowles—Action of the Burford—Appointed to the Comet, bomb—to the Baltimore in the North Seas—Admiral Vernon—Engaged with two French frigates—Receives the rank of Captain, and appointed to command the Triton—Joins Sir C. Knowles in the West Indies—Commands the Glory and goes on the African station—Appointed to the Mary yacht.

WITHOUT considering it necessary, for the present purpose, to trace the pedigree of a family to a remote origin, it may not be deemed irrelevant on the part of the biographer to point out, when such is the fact, how a succession of eminent and noble characters in the same family, so far from diminishing the exertions of their descendants to follow them in the paths of honor and glory, have contributed, as in the case of the family of Howe, to render their names worthy of those of their ancestors.

In the reign of Charles II., the eldest son of *this*

house (John Howe and of his wife Jane Grubham) was created a baronet, and his brother, George Howe, a knight, as due recompenses for their respective services, both being gentlemen eminent in the county of Notts. Sir John Howe, the second son of the first Sir Richard Grubham Howe, having married Annabella, the youngest of the three natural daughters of Emanuel Scrope, Earl of Sunderland, became possessed of that portion of the Scrope estate situated in Notts; this lady was legitimized by Act of Parliament, and became the Lady Annabella Howe. They left four sons, the eldest of whom, John Howe, was Member of Parliament for Cirencester, inherited the family estates in Gloucestershire, held high offices under King William and Queen Anne, and was the immediate ancestor of the Lords Chedworth, a title now extinct.

Charles, the *third* son, left only one daughter; and Emanuel, the fourth son, did the same, having married Ruperta, the natural daughter of Prince Rupert, third son of Frederick, called King of Bohemia, by Elizabeth, daughter of James I. He was a General in the army and Envoy Extraordinary to the Elector of Hanover, afterwards George I.; and from this circumstance probably originated that intimacy with the Royal House of Hanover, which subsists to the present day.

Reverting now to Scrope, the *second* of the four sons of Sir John Grubham Howe and Lady Anna-

bella: he was born in 1648, and inherited from his mother the Nottingham portion of the Scrope estates, was Member of Parliament for Nottingham in the reigns of Charles II., William III., and Queen Anne, and joined the Earl of Nottingham in 1668, in his adhesion to King William on his landing, was created Baron Clenawley and Viscount Howe in 1701, and was also made a Groom of the Bedchamber. In the chapel, in the south aisle of the church of Langar, is a monumental bust of this Lord Howe, on a marble pedestal, bearing this inscription: "Erected to the memory of the Right Honorable Scrope, Lord Viscount Howe, who departed this life the 16th day of January, 1712, aged 64 years. At the revolution in the year 1688, he remarkably distinguished himself in the preservation of the religion and liberties of his country, when popery and arbitrary power threatened the subversion of both. He married Anne, the daughter of John, Earl of Rutland, by whom he had issue one son, who died young, and two daughters. Also Juliana, the daughter of William, Lord Allington, by whom he left issue two sons and three daughters."

Emanuel Scrope Howe, the eldest son, succeeded his father in 1712, and was Member of Parliament for Nottingham. In 1732 he was appointed Governor of Barbados, where he is said to have died by drinking the milk of cocoa nuts, when heated, in March 1734. He married Mary Sophia Charlotte, daughter

of Baron Kielmansegge, Master of the Horse to George I. when Elector of Hanover, by Sophia Charlotte, daughter of Count Platen, of the Empire; she was afterwards created by George I. Countess of Darlington. They left four sons and four daughters, the eldest of whom, George Augustus, of great promise, fell universally lamented in America, and the title and estate devolved on the second son, Richard, the subject of the present memoir.

It is remarkable enough, and can only be explained by the circumstance of the fire at Westport, that no family records have been discovered which throw any light on the early life, the education, genius, and disposition, of any of the four brothers, sons of the Viscount Howe of Langar. All that is known of RICHARD HOWE is, that he was born in 1725, and is supposed to have been sent to Eton about the usual age, though it is not certain whether he had not previously been at Westminster. His name does not appear on the lists of Eton, which, however, seem to have been very imperfectly kept about the year 1735, after which there is a gap of twenty years. On reference to the Provost, he states, "In my boyhood I understood that he left Eton in the second or third form." It was in the year last mentioned, being then ten years of age, that Richard had the misfortune to lose his father, who, as already stated, died at Barbados, after having exercised the functions of Governor of that colony between two and three years. In a

tablet in the church of Langar, is the following inscription near the Howe-vault: "This monument was erected by his sorrowful mother to the memory of the Right Honorable Scrope, Lord Viscount Howe, who, in the year 1732, was, by his Majesty George II., appointed Governor of Barbados. Being adorned with all those great and amiable qualifications which render a man truly noble, by his conduct in that high station he gained the respect and esteem that was justly due to a generous, wise, impartial and disinterested Governor. He departed this life there March 28th 1734, in the thirty-fifth year of his age. He was married in 1719 to Mademoiselle Keilmansegge, and left issue by her four sons and four daughters."

On leaving Eton, when about the age of fourteen, young Richard was entered as midshipman on board the Severn of fifty guns, commanded by the Honourable Edward Legge, son of William, the first Earl of Dartmouth. This ship was one of the squadron placed under the orders of Commodore Anson, and destined for a secret expedition to a part of the world which, at that time, was vaguely designated by the name of the South Seas, though it included the Northern as well as the Southern Pacific. This squadron consisted of the Centurion (the Commodore's ship), the Argyle, Severn, Pearl, Wager, and Tryal sloop. The objects were to make war upon the whole western coasts of Spanish America, to take possession

of some convenient port, to intercept the Galleons with treasure from Acapulco to Manilla; and, in short, to annoy the Spanish colonies and trade in every possible way.

Having passed the Strait le Mair, rounded Cape Horn, and reached Cape Noir on the western side of Terra del Fuego, they encountered a most violent tempest, which dispersed the ships, drove them back to the eastward, and reduced them to the greatest distress, by the violence of the storm, the tremendous sea, and the extreme cold from the snow and sleet, which continued to fall for several days together. "The distresses," says Mr. Walter, the historiographer of this interesting voyage, "with which we struggled, during the three successive months, will not easily be paralleled in the relation of any former naval expedition." The Severn and the Pearl suffered so much that they could not attempt to pass Cape Horn a second time, and were obliged to bear up for Rio de Janeiro. From hence, after having refitted the ships, and refreshed the crews, they returned to England, and thus escaped those perilous disasters detailed with such painful interest in the account of that voyage above alluded to.

Such is not unfrequently the severe and trying introduction of young men into the sea service; but whatever their feelings may be, regarding the dangers, hardships, and the many inconveniences of a seafaring life thus early experienced, the example of

others, little more advanced than themselves in the same profession, is generally found quite sufficient to prevent them from showing symptoms of dislike, on the contrary, rather to encourage them in a determination to persevere. Young Howe was obviously nothing daunted by this experimental trial, as we find him, immediately after his return, on board the Burford, commanded by Captain Franklin Lushington, one of a fleet destined for the West Indies under Admiral Sir Chaloner Ogle; a squadron of which, detached from this fleet, was under the immediate orders of Sir Charles Knowles, who left Spithead in the month of February, 1742. The first operation of this squadron was an attack on La Guayra on the coast of the Caraccas, in which the Burford was so roughly handled, the Captain being mortally wounded, that the first lieutenant found it necessary to withdraw her from under the fire, and carry her into Curaçoa, where the Captain died two hours after he was landed. The lieutenant was tried by court-martial for having so withdrawn her, and acquitted chiefly on the evidence of the carpenter, confirmed by the testimony of the surviving officers of the ship, as to the danger of her keeping the sea, in consequence of the damages she had received in her hull.

In what manner young Howe conducted himself on this first occasion of being under fire, there are no records to refer to. The death of the Captain and the court-martial on the first lieutenant seem to have

prevented any special report being made on the conduct of the Burford, at least none can be traced beyond the minutes of the court. In this respect, Mr. Howe would appear to have been less lucky than young heroes generally are found to be in their biographical memoirs, wherein that celebrity is not unusually anticipated and predicted, which they are in after-times to obtain, and wherein they are mostly described as giving an earnest of future deeds of valour, from the moment they throw off their juvenile clothing. Howe was not fortunate enough to have his youthful deeds thus recorded; he was now in his eighteenth year, without his name having once been entered on the annals of fame, except, indeed, once or twice where it is exhibited in fictitious characters; as for instance, in the following circumstantial narrative which has passed current through various chronicles, lives, and registers, without a shadow of foundation for any one incident detailed therein. It relates to the action just mentioned, in which the Burford was concerned:—

"The tender and grateful attachment which our young officer [Mr. Howe] entertained for his Captain, is pleasing to recollect, and must not be passed unnoticed. Being required to give evidence relative to the conduct of the Burford, at a court-martial held subsequent to the action, he proceeded in a clear and collected manner, until he came to relate the melancholy death of his beloved and gallant friend. Though possessing the strongest nerves, which he has since

proved are not liable to be affected by those passions which often distract the minds of even the bravest men, the keen emotions of his youthful heart so overcame his hitherto firm recital, that, unable to proceed, he requested the indulgence of the court, until he could sufficiently collect himself. He then related that Captain Lushington, having his thigh shot off, continued giving directions to his first lieutenant, until he sunk down fainting from loss of blood. He was then conveyed to the cockpit. 'I was soon sent,' said the young officer, 'by the first lieutenant for orders.' 'My dear Howe,' said the noble Lushington, on seeing him approach, 'since I have been brought down (*since?*) I have received a mortal wound; tell the lieutenant to use his own judgment.' He was proceeding to relate the death of his brave commander, when he again burst into a flood of tears, and retired."

It will appear scarcely credible, but so it is, that the whole and every part of this circumstantial piece of pathos is purely romance, without one word of truth in it,—in short, that it is a complete fiction. Mr. Howe was not examined at all at the court-martial—he was not even called on to give evidence—neither his name nor that of Captain Lushington appears on the minutes of the court, which related solely to the supposed sinking state of the ship when she withdrew from the action:—"And this is history!" as the old king of Prussia said, when two eye-witnesses to the

same fact related it in a sense directly opposite to each other. The conduct of Howe, however, must be presumed to have met with the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, as immediately after this he gave him an order to act as lieutenant in one of the ships about to proceed to England. But whether this appointment was the result of his gallantry and good conduct, or merely a mark of the Commodore's favour, it did not in the least avail him; whatever interest or influence his rank in life might be supposed to give him, it had not sufficient weight at home to obtain a confirmation of his commission. He at once, therefore, took the determination of returning to the West Indies to rejoin his patron. Here he was not suffered to remain long before an opportunity occurred of placing him in a vacancy, as lieutenant of the Comet bomb. This was given to him by Commodore Knowles, on the 25th May, 1744, and was confirmed on the 8th August, 1745; shortly after which his ship was paid off.

This year, 1745, which furnishes a memorable epoch in the annals of Great Britain, was favourable to the prospects of Mr. Howe. The mistaken loyalty of the Scots to the family of an unfortunate sovereign having burst out in that year into open rebellion, the French, never backward when any opportunity affords to add to the embarrassments of England, availed themselves of this favourable event, by not only encouraging, but materially assisting, the Pre-

tender to try his desperate fortunes, by a landing on the coast of Scotland. For this purpose, a fleet of frigates, small vessels, and transports, laden with stores and ammunition, and having the Pretender on board, was prepared at Ostend and Dunkirk. To watch the movements of this armament in the Channel and the North Sea, a very considerable fleet was stationed in the Downs, the command of which was given to Admiral Vernon, recently returned, with a high character as a gallant naval officer, from the West Indies; and under him was Vice-Admiral Martin, with Commodore Smith on the coast of Scotland. Several frigates and sloops were detached to the North Seas, and in the command of one of the latter, the Baltimore, we find the name of Commander Howe; but whether the promotion was made through the interest of Admiral Vernon, who had not yet lost his well-earned popularity, does not appear; though it may be inferred that he was a favourite with the Admiral, by his being selected to carry up a loyal address to his Majesty from the fleet under the Admiral's orders. It is not unlikely, indeed, that this may have been the occasion of his promotion, as it appears that he saw the Duke of Bedford, then first lord of the Admiralty, at Woburn Abbey, who told him, that being employed in raising a regiment in Bedfordshire, he could not present the address himself, but would send it to Lord Sandwich, second in the Board of Admiralty, to present to his Majesty.

Vernon was unquestionably a brave man himself, and loved to encourage enterprise in others; it is not improbable, therefore, that he should patronise young Howe.

The fate of this gallant admiral was a peculiarly hard one, and such as would now be deemed as unjust as it was cruel. He fell a sacrifice to the writing of two foolish squibs, in the shape of pamphlets, against his employers; but they were smothered in their own smoke, went off without fire and without noise, scorching nobody but himself. He was nevertheless summoned to attend the Board of Admiralty; the pamphlets were shewn to him, and he was desired by the Duke of Bedford to give a categorical answer, *Ay* or *No*, whether he was the author and publisher. He said he fully admitted the authority of the Lord High Admiral, and, as a military officer, owed all obedience to his orders; but that he looked upon the question now asked, as one of a private nature, which he apprehended their Lordships had no right to ask him, and that he was not bound to answer it. The Duke said, if that was the only answer he meant to give, he might withdraw. The next day he received a letter from the Secretary, to say that the Duke of Bedford having laid the pamphlet before the King, his Majesty had been pleased to direct their Lordships to strike his name out of the list of flag-officers. There could be no excuse for this rash and tyrannical proceeding, as the wished-for end might legally have been accomplished by a court-martial. Walpole calls

Vernon a silly, noisy admiral, so popular, that he was chosen into Parliament for several places, had his head painted on every sign, and his birth-day kept twice in one year. His fall, however, is not a singular instance of the fate that sometimes awaits vulgar popularity; but this is the last exercise on record of so harsh and summary a proceeding against a gallant flag-officer. "To say he was a brave, a gallant man," says Charnock, "would be a needless repetition of what no person has ever presumed to deny him. His judgment, his abilities, as a statesman, are unquestioned; and his character, as a man of strict integrity and honour, perfectly unsullied."

That the Board of Admiralty is fully invested with the dangerous and equally disagreeable authority to erase an individual's name from the list of naval officers, and thus for ever ruin his prospects in life, cannot be called in question; but it ought to be resorted to only in cases where the Act of Parliament, by which naval discipline is governed and upheld, precludes the exercise of such a jurisdiction as is thereby provided; and where the Board of Admiralty, as the law now stands, is imperatively called upon to act in cases that cannot be brought before a court-martial. When the necessity for such a proceeding occurs, as that of striking an officer's name from the list, the public and the individual may be well assured, that a body of three or four highly honourable men, naturally prejudiced in favour of a brother

officer, would be slow to condemn him to disgrace, and, in some cases, to absolute and hopeless poverty, without having first satisfied themselves, that a court-martial, if one could have been held, would have pronounced the same or a similar sentence.

The first occasion, on which the name of Howe is publicly mentioned, is in the account of the siege of Fort William, and it occurs in the Military Journal, in which is the following entry:—"Tuesday, 18th March. The Baltimore, Captain Richard Howe, went up towards Killmady Barns, in order to protect the landing of our men. He fired several shot, and threw some cohorn shells, and set one hovel on fire; but could not attempt landing, for the rebels were entrenched by a hollow road or rill, and in great numbers. The Baltimore's guns, being only four-pounders, had no effect on the stone-walls of these barns, which the rebels had before loop-holed. We brought our people back without any damage."

A more distinguished service, however, awaited him. Having joined the Greyhound frigate, commanded by Captain Noel, on the 1st May, two large ships were seen in a place called Loch Nouy in Mordant, one of which, wearing a broad pendant, was considered to be the Commodore. An action speedily commenced, in which the Greyhound, having her fore-topsail-ties shot away and most of the braces, found it necessary to come to anchor with a spring, which enabled Captain Noel to rake the largest of the Frenchmen, as she kept turning just to leeward

of him. "The Baltimore," says Captain Noel, "followed me, and also began on the Commodore, but was received with a very smart fire, which cut her rigging so as to oblige her to anchor and repair it. The Baltimore then cut and came a second time to the attack, but was again repulsed, and obliged to let go her anchor to cast, then cut and stood off, her foremast and bowsprit very much wounded, and mainyard shot away in the quarter of the yard, and never an anchor left except her sheet, the arm of which had been broke before. I sent him our stream anchor. By this time the Frenchmen were both at anchor, having driven to leeward out of point-blank shot." He then goes on to say, "the French ships had one of them 34 guns, 24 nine-pounders and 10 four-pounders; the other 32 guns, 22 nine-pounders and 10 four-pounders. Commander Howe was severely wounded in the head, which at first was suppoed to be fatal; but he was only stunned, or, as Captain Noel, who went on board the Baltimore, has it, "he was a little disordered." Previous to this action he found, on his arrival in England, that he had been raised to the rank of Captain, and appointed to the Triton, on the 20th April 1747, in which he was ordered to convoy the trade to Oporto and Lisbon; and at the latter place to receive on board treasure, and bring it to England, without taking charge of the trading ships. Here, however, having met with the Rippon, destined for the coast of Guinea,

whose Captain, Holborne, was unwell, they agreed to exchange ships, which being approved, Captain Howe received his commission for the Rippon on the 11th September 1747, proceeded to run down the coast, as was then usual, and afterwards to cross the Atlantic for the Leeward Islands. Rear-Admiral Knowles was at that time commanding a squadron on the Jamaica station, and having heard of Captain Howe being at Barbados, writes thus to the Board of Admiralty: "If their Lordships would indulge me with Captain Howe's coming from the Leeward Islands down here, as he is a pupil of my own and equally desirous of being with me, I should esteem it a favour."

Permission was granted, and he arrived at Jamaica, just late enough to miss the opportunity of distinguishing himself in the action with the Spanish fleet off the Havannah, on the 2nd October 1748, in which the Cornwall, bearing the flag of the Admiral, suffered so much, that it was thought expedient to send her home in the spring. Howe was appointed her captain, and intelligence having arrived of a Treaty of General Peace being signed at Aix-la-Chapelle, on the 18th October 1748, he returned in the Cornwall to England.

The calm and tranquil life which a sailor is compelled generally to live on shore, compared with the active and unremitting employment afloat, which had been the case with respect to the subject of this memoir, during the space of ten years, but ill accords

with that constant wear and tear both of body and mind which the command and the various duties of a ship of war require, to say nothing of the anxious and ardent desire of distinction, with which every lover of his profession is imbued. Captain Howe seems to have felt this languor, arising from a state of inactivity; and though a time of profound peace offers but little prospect for the acquisition of fame or fortune, yet while the pendant is over head, there is always an opportunity of acquiring knowledge in the profession, and also of being in the way of taking advantage of anything that may turn up. He therefore, in the early part of the year 1751, obtained a commission for the Glory, of 44 guns, destined to run down the coast of Africa, to visit the settlements on that coast, and for the protection of the traders. The only piece of service, he was here called upon to perform, was to redress the wrongs of which the merchants of Cape Coast Castle had to complain, on the part of the Dutch Governor of the neighbouring castle Elmina. With the Swan sloop under his orders, he anchored close under the walls of the castle, and sent Commander Digges with a letter addressed to General Van Voorst, demanding immediate satisfaction for the injury done to the English merchants, and also a restitution of some free negroes, whom he had put in prison. The Governor hesitated to comply, but Howe gave him distinctly to understand that, although the two nations were at peace, he felt

himself authorized, by his instructions, to prevent any communication of Dutch ships with the fort, until his demands should be complied with; on which the Dutch Governor acquiesced, and all differences were adjusted.

On his return home, at the close of the year 1751, he was appointed to the honorary command of the Mary yacht, vacant by the death of her captain; but still desirous of more active employment, he left the yacht on being commissioned to the Dolphin frigate, in the month of May 1752. In this ship he was employed about two years in the protection of the trade in the Straits of Gibraltar and along the Coast of France, Spain, and Barbary, in the Mediterranean, and returned to England in the year 1754. The knowledge he acquired of the navigation of the Straits, the set of the current in the centre, and of the eddies on the Gibraltar and Barbary shores, he had an opportunity of bringing into action many years after this visit.

CHAPTER II.

EXPEDITIONS TO THE COAST OF FRANCE.

Howe having obtained the rank of Captain joins Admiral Boscawen in the Dunkirk—proceeds off Newfoundland—Howe attacks the Alcide and Lys—Various accounts of this action—Commands a squadron for the protection of Jersey and Guernsey—Takes Chaussé—French abandon their designs on the Channel Islands—Expedition to the Coast of France on a great scale—Characters of those employed—Howe joins it in the Magnanime—Attacks and carries Isle d'Aix—Discussions of the military officers respecting the attack upon Rochefort—given up—Another expedition—Mr. Pitt's object in persevering in them—Its naval force—Extent of naval and land forces—Howe appointed to command the one, as Commodore—the Duke of Marlborough the other—Land at Concale—St. Maloes—Howe's character—They fail before Cherburg, and return—A third expedition—the land forces under Lieut. General Bligh—Attack Cherburg and succeed—Proceed to the westward—land troops at St. Lunaire Bay—Arrangements for embarking troops at St. Cas—disasters at this place—Return to England.

HITHERTO the character of young Howe has been exhibited only as an officer employed in the ordinary course of service, no opportunity having occurred for the display of those splendid talents, which in after years distinguished the mature man. He had the good fortune, however, to reach the highest step of rank, short of a flag officer, about the twentieth year of his age, and the sixth of his servitude. But such rapid advancement does not appear, in his case, to have

been the result of any undue influence, either from party or family connexions; in those days such early promotion was not unusual, and numerous instances might be quoted, even of a much later date, of youths having risen to the rank of captain at the age of fifteen or sixteen. That abuse, for such it certainly was, has long ceased to exist, and no such untimely progress can by possibility be made in our days. A youth, who now enters the naval profession, must serve six years in one or more of His Majesty's ships, and must have completed his nineteenth year of age, before he can be examined even, as to his qualifications to render him eligible for the commission of lieutenant; he must serve two years more in a sea-going ship, to qualify for the commission of commander; and one year, for that of captain. So that the very earliest period, supposing not a day to be lost, at which a naval officer can now arrive at the rank of captain, is when he has completed the age of twenty-two; and he may deem himself fortunate, if he acquires that rank by the time he is thirty; many indeed are they who never attain it at all. Such is the effect of the long list of captains, amounting, in the year 1837, to about 760, instead of 284, the number on the list in the year 1750; and of admirals, in the former year, 136, in the place of 18! in the latter.

In the course of the year 1754 Captain Howe returned to England, where he was not suffered long to remain unemployed on shore; for early in 1755,

in consequence of certain intelligence reaching the Government that powerful armaments were preparing in the ports of Brest and Rochefort, supposed to be destined for an attack on our settlements in North America, a squadron was ordered to be immediately put into a state of readiness, to proceed to that quarter, the command of which was given to Admiral Boscawen. Towards the end of April, the Admiral put to sea with eleven sail of the line and a frigate, and was afterwards reinforced with six sail of the line and a frigate under Admiral Holbourne. In this fleet Captain Howe had the command of the Dunkirk, of 60 guns, to which ship he had been appointed on the 20th January 1755.

Though the intentions of France, with regard to the annoyance of our American trade and settlements, and the protection of their own, could not be doubted, she had neither yet declared war, nor committed any act of direct and unequivocal hostility. In this state of doubt and suspension Admiral Boscawen sailed from Plymouth on the 27th April, having on board two regiments of troops. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral Bois de la Motte, had previously put to sea unperceived, though not unexpected; but Boscawen was on the ground before him, and took up a position with his fleet off Cape Race, the southernmost point of Newfoundland, as the most likely place to hear of, or to intercept, if necessary, the French fleet, whose destination then was not doubted

to be the river St. Lawrence, either to make an attack on our Canadian establishments, or to reinforce and protect their own. The French Admiral having, as is supposed, learned the position taken up by Boscawen, divided his squadron into two parts, one portion of which passed through the Straits of Belleisle, a most dangerous navigation, never probably before attempted by a ship of the line; the other portion gained the St. Lawrence by the usual passage round Newfoundland, and escaped the British fleet, owing to the fogs that prevail there, more especially in the spring of the year. In one of these fogs the ships of the British squadron had been dispersed, and the Dunkirk and Defiance, of 60 guns each, on the fog clearing away, found themselves not only separated from the rest, but very near to two of De la Motte's ships, the Alcide and the Lys, the former of 64 guns, and 480 men, and the latter pierced for the same number; but being armed *en flute* mounted only 22: this ship had on board eight companies of soldiers.

No declaration of war on either side had yet reached Boscawen, but his instructions appear to have fully prepared him for hostilities. It required therefore no little delicacy on the part of Captain Howe in what manner to act. His good sense, however, dictated to him the only line of conduct he had to pursue. Under a press of sail, he first came alongside the sternmost ship, the Alcide, and having hailed the captain in the usual manner, requested he would proceed with him

to the British Admiral, then in sight at the distance of about six miles. Monsieur Houquart, the captain, immediately asked whether it was peace or war? Captain Howe repeated his desire that he would accompany him to the admiral, to prevent any order, which he might receive by signal, to fire into him for not having brought to when pursued, which signal he should be bound to obey. During the parley the signal was actually thrown out from the flag-ship to engage. The result is told in so many different ways, and in so loose a manner, which unfortunately is the case in all naval transactions throughout the reign of George II., that it may be as well to give both the admiral's account of this smart action, and that which appeared in the Gazette, for they do not agree. They are each dated the 22nd June, and both appear to have been received on the same day. Admiral Boscawen says, "On the ninth (June) at 4 P.M., we saw three sail of large ships to windward; I hoisted French colours, and they bore down to us, but it proving little wind, they could not join us, and by our keeping the wind all night, at daylight in the morning we saw them, about six or seven miles upon our lee bow; they made signals, but not being answered by us, made all the sail they could from us. About noon, Captain Howe, in the Dunkirk, came alongside of the sternmost, when observing the French ship did not shorten sail, I made the signal to engage, which was directly obeyed by Captain Howe, and returned by the French ship, but in a very few

minutes he was brought by the lee, and upon the Torbay's coming up (which was the next ship) and firing one gun only, she struck, the Alcide of 64 guns, four hundred and eighty men, commanded by Monsieur Houquart, about 4 P.M.; on the 10th the Lys, pierced for 64 guns, having on board four companies of the regiment La Reine, and four companies of the regiment Languedoc, after firing stern chace for two hours, struck to the Fogueux and Defiance, but a fog coming on, the third ship, the Dauphin Royal (who the French say is the best sailor in France) escaped the same night."

The Gazette, dated July 15, says, "By letters received by the Gibraltar man-of-war, from Vice-Admiral Boscawen, dated off Louisburgh the 22nd June 1755, there is an account that, on the 10th of that month, the Alcide, a French man-of-war of 64 guns and 480 men, commanded by M. Houquart, and the Lys, commanded by Monsieur Lageril, pierced for 64 guns, but mounting only 22, and having eight companies of land forces on board, being separated from the French squadron commanded by M. Bois de la Motte, fell in with the English fleet off the banks of Newfoundland, and that a skirmish happened between the said French men-of-war and His Majesty's ships the Dunkirk and Defiance, in which the Alcide and Lys were taken. The French ship the Dauphin Royal, which had been in company with the two above mentioned, disappeared in the fog."

Here we have no account of the Fogueux, or of the Torbay (the flag ship) firing a gun, which, if she did, must have been a very distant and innocent one. Horace Walpole generally got at the true pith of the story, and he thus writes to his correspondent, Horace Mann:—

"Our correspondence will revive—the war is begun—I cannot refer you to the Gazette, for it is so prudent, and so afraid that Europe should say we began first (and unless the Gazette tell, how should Europe know?) that it tells nothing at all. The case was, Captain Howe and Captain Andrews lay in a great fog that lasted near fifty hours, within speech of three French ships, and within sight of nine more. The Commandant asked if it were war or peace? Howe replied he must wait for his Admiral's signal, but advised the Frenchman to prepare for war. Immediately Boscawen gave the signal and Howe attacked. The French, who lost 130 men to our 13, soon struck; we took one large ship, one inconsiderable and seven thousand pounds; the third ship escaped in the fog." The log of the Dunkirk, in the usual laconic style, thus relates the action:—"Being got up with the sternmost, the Alcide of 64 guns, a little before noon, and the Captain refusing to shorten sail, engaged with (the signal having been made by the Vice-Admiral) and brought the ship to. Men killed in the action 7, rendered unserviceable from wounds 5; wounded in a lesser degree 20."

The Admiral, having ascertained that the rest of the French fleet had arrived safe at Quebec, proceeded to Halifax and, leaving Rear-Admiral Holbourne with a few ships to blockade Louisburgh, returned to England with the prisoners and money taken in the two ships, amounting to about 8000*l.* Trifling as this affair of the Alcide and Lys would be considered at any other time, in a national point of view, it appears to have produced a great moral effect in England; the people, and the mercantile interests in particular, having been kept a long time in a state of suspense between peace and war. "Though this action," says that excellent historian Rapin, "was far from answering the grand destination of the fleet, yet when the news of it reached England, it was of infinite service to the public credit of every kind, as the manner in which it was conducted was a plain proof that the British Government was resolved to observe no further measures with the French, but to take or destroy their ships wherever they could be met with."

Thus commenced the war with France, known in our history as the Seven Years' War, in the naval part of which Captain Howe, by his zeal, ability, and great exertions, raised for himself a name that led uninterruptedly and rapidly to the highest honours of the profession. In the early part of the year 1756 he was chiefly and actively employed in the Channel service, and took some valuable prizes returning from

the West Indies, laden with sugar, coffee, and other produce of the colonies. The French, in the mean time, were marching down troops to the coast about Granville and St. Maloes, and making great preparations for an invasion of Guernsey and Jersey. Reinforcements of troops were sent from England to these islands; and such was the confidence which the naval administration placed in the skill, energy, and bravery of Howe, that, in June 1756, they conferred on this young officer the command of a squadron of ships, to be employed in the protection of, and to give confidence as well as assistance to, these channel islands. His instructions were to harass the enemy by every possible means, and to take possession of Chaussé and its islands, on which an Irish brigade, in the service of France, was stationed; and further, to disturb the intercourse of the enemy between their northern and western provinces; in short, to harass the coast wherever it should be practicable, and to capture and destroy their coasting trade.

For this purpose, the squadron placed under his orders consisted of the

Dunkirk . .	480 men.	Deal Castle .	160 men.
Rochester .	350	Queenborough .	160
Ludlow Castle .	250	Ferret . .	100
Dover . .	250	Happy . .	50,

together with four transports, conveying troops for the defence of the islands of Guernsey and Jersey; and such was the expedition with which this arma-

ment was prepared for sea that, on the 13th July, we find Howe proceeding from Jersey, having first taken on board four companies of General Blockland's regiment, and one of invalids belonging to Guernsey, to the island of Chaussé. He immediately summoned the fort to surrender, which the Commandant as speedily complied with and gavé up the place, on being permitted to retire with military honours to Granville. Finding, however, on examination of the island, that it would occupy a considerable time, and a great number of men, to put the works into a proper state of defence, and would require moreover at least 500 troops to be left for its protection, besides occasioning a very heavy expense to the country, Howe determined at once to blow up the works, which he speedily and effectually accomplished. And having ascertained that the French, by the blow thus opportunely struck, had deemed it expedient to abandon their designs on the Channel Islands, and withdrawn their troops towards Brest and the ports lower down on the coast, he left a part of his squadron to annoy and capture their coasting trade, and returned in the Dunkirk to Plymouth Sound, towards the end of the year, to refit.

The success of this little expedition encouraged the ministry to extend the plan of operations against the ports and towns on the French coast; and a fleet for this purpose was assembled at Spithead, under the orders of Sir Edward Hawke, of which Rear-

Admiral Knowles was second in command, and in which Howe bore a distinguished share. The fleet consisted of sixteen sail of the line, two frigates, five sloops, two bombs, two fire-ships, and a number of transports, having on board about 7000 land forces, under the command of Sir John Mordaunt. The several characters of the land and sea officers, employed on this occasion, are dexterously, and not inaccurately drawn by Horace Walpole in his usual laconic style. "Their faults," he says, "flowed from no want of courage. Mordaunt had a sort of alacrity in daring, but from ill health was grown more indifferent to it." The character of Conway, the second in command, is thus sketched:—"Cold in his deportment, and with a dignity of soul that kept him too much above familiarity, he missed that affection from his brother officers, which his unsullied virtues and humanity deserved; for he wanted the extrinsic of merit. Added to these little failings, he had a natural indecision in his temper, weighing with too much minuteness, and too much fluctuation, whatever depended on his own judgment. Cornwallis was a man of a very different complexion; as cool as Conway and as brave, he was indifferent to everything but to being in the right. He held fame cheap, and smiled at reproach. General Howard was one of those sort of characters who are only to be distinguished by having no peculiarity of character. Under these was Wolfe, a young offi-

cer who had contracted reputation from his intelligence of discipline, and from the perfection to which he had brought his own regiment. He looked on danger as the favourable moment that would call forth his talents. Sir Edward Hawke, who commanded the fleet, was a man of steady courage, of fair appearance, and who even did not want a plausible kind of sense; but he was really weak, and childishly abandoned to the guidance of a Scotch secretary. The next was Knowles, a vain man, of more parade than real bravery. Howe, brother of the lord of that name, was the third on the naval list. He was undaunted as a rock, and as silent—the characteristics of his whole race. He and Wolfe soon contracted a friendship, like the union of cannon and gunpowder."

In equipping this large armament, the government had two objects in view: the one, to destroy the enemy's principal naval arsenals, and burn, sink, or capture his shipping: the other, the principal one, to create a diversion in favour of the King of Prussia and the Duke of Cumberland, by compelling the French to withdraw a part of their continental army for the protection of their own coast. The first object of this expedition was, as stated in a joint letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt (afterwards Lord Chatham), to Sir Edward Hawke and Sir John Mordaunt, "to attempt, as far as shall be found practicable, a descent on the French coast, at or near Rochefort, in

order to attack if practicable, and, by a vigorous impression, force that place; and to burn and destroy, to the utmost of your power, all shipping, docks, magazines, and arsenals, that shall be found there, and exert such other efforts as shall be judged most proper for annoying the enemy."

A detachment of the fleet, consisting of the Neptune, bearing the flag of Admiral Knowles, the Magnanime, Barfleur, America, Burford, Royal William, and Alcide, together with the transports, were ordered by Sir Edward Hawke to proceed to Basque Roads, to attack, and endeavour to get possession of, the Isle d'Aix, as the prelude to a further attempt on Rochefort. In this fleet Captain the Hon. Richard Howe commanded the Magnanime of 74 guns, to which ship he had been removed on the 13th June, the same day on which Captain Robert Digby was appointed to the Dunkirk, so that Howe's services, in the latter, had been continuous till his transfer to the Magnanime, one of the finest and most favourite ships in the class of 74's.

On the 8th September the squadron left Spithead, and on the 22nd anchored in Basque Roads. On the 23rd the Vice-Admiral prepared to attack the Isle d'Aix; two French ships of the line, that were at anchor off the island, on seeing the British ships under weigh, slipped their cables and ran into the river Charente. About the middle of the day, as the ships approached the island, the batteries opened their fire

of shot and shells. The Magnanime had been ordered to lead, and Captain Howe stood on direct for the fort, with that steady resolution that never forsook him, reserving his fire until he advanced within forty yards of the fort, when he brought up with a spring on his cable, and opened so tremendous and well-directed a fire, that in about half an hour the enemy were completely driven from their guns and surrendered. In the fort were mounted twenty-eight pieces of cannon, and eight large mortars; and on the tower were two handsome and highly-finished brass twelve-pounders, which Sir John Mordaunt presented to Captain Howe, in testimony of his steady bravery and brilliant service on that day, requesting him to place them as a trophy and, at the same time, an useful ornament to the Magnanime's quarter-deck.

In Sir Edward Hawke's letter reporting this service, he says, that in order to secure a safe landing for the troops, he directed Rear-Admiral Brodrick, with Captains Denis, Douglas, and Buckle, to sound and reconnoitre the shore of the main, and make their report to him. "After maturely considering it, I was of opinion," says the Admiral, "they might land." Much time, however, was wasted in discussing the probability of effecting a landing at Fouras, and marching from thence upon Rochefort. "Conway twice proposed this scheme. Nobody approved of it. Conway grew impatient, and pressed for some action.

His importunity at last prevailed for an attack to be made on Fouras; all the Generals resolved to be present, and the first division actually embarked. The night was clear, but the wind blew from the shore; Howe told them it was not safe at that time; and Wolfe pronounced it would be bloody work. They were ordered back from the boats." This is Walpole's story; and he adds that Conway took a cutter and twenty marines, and went to survey the coast. A battery fired on them, and one of the rowers said, "Sir, we are in great danger." He replied coolly, "Pho, they cannot hurt us;" and, turning to young Fitzroy, he said, "Now, if they would not say I was boyish, I would land with these twenty marines, to show them what we can do."

After as much time had been lost as was sufficient for the French to assemble a force at Rochefort, just as, on a later occasion, they succeeded by delay in marching an army to protect Antwerp, it ended in Sir J. Mordaunt desiring that a council of war might be assembled to consider of it; *there* it was granted by everybody "that the landing could be effected." Sir John Mordaunt, however, called a second council of war, which unanimously agreed that it was advisable to land the troops "to attack the forts leading to, and upon the mouth of, the river Charente." Immediately on this, the disposition was made for landing, under the direction of Rear-Admiral Brodrick and all the captains of the squadron. Part of the troops were

actually in the boats, when the two following letters were received by Sir Edward Hawke:—

"Sir,—I have prepared all the boats, with proper officers, to land the troops, agreeable to your order; but am to acquaint you that the Generals are come to a resolution not to land to-night, and to wait till daylight, when they can have a full view of the ground where they are to land.

"I am, &c.

"THOMAS BRODRICK."

The other is peculiarly laconic:—

"Sir,—Upon the receipt of your letter, I talked it over with the other land officers, who were of our councils of war, and we all agree in returning directly to England.

"I am, Sir, &c.

"J. MORDAUNT."

So much for "councils of war," which have too frequently been held for no other purpose than to furnish an excuse for not doing that, which duty and instructions required; but here there was no excuse, as the officers of both services had agreed on the practicability of landing the troops. But the fort of Fouras, which commands the entrance of the channel of the Charente, was the ostensible and avowed obstacle against a landing. It was stated that large ships could not approach sufficiently near for their cannon to reach it; if so, neither could its guns reach the ships.

But it was not necessary that the landing of the troops to march upon Rochefort should have been effected within reach of the shot of that weak fort: it might have been accomplished much nearer to Rochefort. On examination of the French pilot Thierri, who had carried the Magnanime close to the walls of Aix, he gave his decided opinion that the approach was practicable, and volunteered to take the same ship before Fouras. He was told that the Barfleur drew less water, and he might take her; but he persisted in preferring the Magnanime. Being pressed on this point, as to his reason for the preference, he replied, "*Parceque le Capitaine Howe est jeune et brave.*" It was attempted to throw discredit on Thierri's evidence, and to accuse him of ignorance. Sir Edward Hawke, however, in his letter to Mr. Pitt, says, "The pilot of the Magnanime has behaved like a man of bravery and skill, and as such I beg leave to recommend him to you."

The joint instructions for the combined operations being drawn up and communicated by Mr. Pitt, Captain Howe, being also under two Admirals, did not think it any part of his duty to inform the Admiralty of the proceedings of the military on shore, but remained, as Walpole says, "silent as a rock." The Admiralty, however, expressed their wishes, in a letter received at St. Maloes, to know from himself what was going on, to which he replied: "With regard to the operations of the troops, I was silent, as

not being at that time well enough informed thereof, and to avoid the mention of any particulars that might prove not exactly agreeable to the truth." It may be said, indeed, that the character of Howe was eminently distinguished by modesty and truth. Whether or not he was satisfied with the proceedings of the military upon this occasion, nowhere appears; but in afterlife his own letters are sufficiently explicit on this point, that a conjoint expedition is rarely well conducted,—in which opinion Nelson entirely concurred.

The mortification at the failure of the expedition, it is scarcely necessary to say, was felt by every naval officer concerned in it. Sir Edward Hawke, in his letter to Mr. Secretary Pitt, says, "I beg leave to assure you, Sir, I have discharged my duty to my King and country with fidelity, diligence, and integrity, and wish more could have been done for the good of the service." Nor was it any consolation for the disappointment of such a result to the brave officers of the navy, that Lieutenant-General Sir John Mordaunt, after a long trial before a military court-martial, on his return to England, was acquitted of the charges brought against him, which were, "that he had disobeyed his Majesty's orders and instructions."

The failure of this enterprise cast a general gloom over the whole country, and the public, which seldom errs in its judgment on matters of this kind, ascribed it wholly to the army. Disheartening, how-

ever, as the result was, it had the effect rather to stimulate, than to deter, the government from making a fresh attempt on the enemy's coast, and the more so from certain intelligence received, that preparations on a great scale were again making at St. Maloes to invade the islands of Jersey and Guernsey. It was not so much the object of Mr. Pitt to distress the inhabitants of the coast by destroying their trade and fishery, and burning their villages; his great mind soared far above making any such petty warfare the main design of military operations; but he considered them as the surest mode of alarming the French government, and inducing it to withdraw a portion of its forces from the continental war. It was therefore resolved to fit out another expedition on a more extensive scale, for the purpose of making a descent on different parts of the French coast; and in order to draw off the attention of the enemy, and prevent any serious interruption to the operations of the troops, a fleet of seventeen sail of the line and several frigates, under the command of Admiral Lord Anson, was prepared with all possible dispatch, and sailed from Spithead on the 1st of June 1758, to blockade Brest, where it was understood a naval armament of considerable force was in a forward state of preparation. On the same day—a day destined in future times to be propitious to the name of Howe—a squadron put to sea, consisting of the Essex of 64 guns, and 495 men, four ships of 50, three frigates of 36, three of 32, and three of 28 guns;

besides eleven sloops, bombs, and fire-ships, thirty store-ships, cutters, tenders, and one hundred sail of transports. To the command of this powerful armament Captain Howe was appointed as Commodore. He left his favourite ship, the Magnanime, and hoisted his broad pendant in the Essex, as better adapted for the shallow waters on the coast of France.

The command of the land forces was given to Lieut.-General Charles Duke of Marlborough, whose staff consisted of Lieut.-Generals Lord George Sackville and Earl of Ancram; Major-Generals Waldegrave, Mostyn, Dring, Boscawen, and Elliot; Brigadier Elliot (afterwards Lord Heathfield), commanding the Light Horse, Lieut.-Colonel Hotham, Adjutant-General, and Captain Watson, Quarter-master General. Many young men of family accompanied the Duke as volunteers, among whom were Sir James Lowther, Sir John Armitage, Lord Viscount Downe, and several others. The land forces consisted of three regiments of Guards, commanded by General Drury, and other troops amounting to fifteen battalions, 400 Artillery, 540 Light Horse, making in the whole about 13,000 fighting men, sixty pieces of cannon, and fifty of various kinds of mortars. The name of Marlborough had, in former days, left an impression in France that did not lessen their alarm on hearing that a visit was probably intended for them by another of the same name, as Commander-in-Chief of the present powerful armament.

The Duke and his staff, to the number of fifteen

or sixteen persons, embarked on board the Essex, and about noon of the 1st of June the whole squadron got under way, Lord Anson and his fleet having preceded them in the early part of the day. The weather becoming tempestuous, it was not till the morning of the 6th of June that they came to anchor in Concale Bay. The transports, having the Grenadiers on board, were ordered to stand in towards the shore under the protection of three of the frigates, into one of which, the Success, the Commodore shifted his broad pendant, that he might approach nearer the shore than he could do in the Essex. The battery fired upon the troops while in their flat-bottomed boats, but the well-directed fire from the frigates soon silenced the enemy's guns, and the Grenadiers landed without further opposition; the French having fled with the utmost precipitation. The inhabitants of the village of Concale also deserted it, leaving that place to the mercy of the invaders, consisting only of a small party of soldiers and sailors, who, however, were unfortunately not restrained from plundering the houses; but the most discreditable, as well as barbarous and inhuman act was committed on the person of a highly respectable man, the Marquis Landal, intendant of the coast and Colonel of Militia. Unwilling to give up his castle without some show of resistance, to save his honor he refused to surrender, upon which he was shot dead on the spot. All this was paltry work enough, but it was all that was done

at this place; and the French learned from subsequent events, as Walpole says, that they were not to be conquered by every Duke of Marlborough.

The next morning the whole army, except the third brigade which remained at Concale, marched in two columns toward St. Maloes, and encamped a little more than a mile from the town. The Light Horse advanced to the walls, and were saluted by the guns from the ramparts, which killed a few horses without any other loss. At night the same party, with the picquet of foot, made their way close under the walls to the harbour, where they found a 50-gun ship, two 36-gun frigates, upwards of twenty privateers, and seventy or eighty merchant ships; to these the troops set fire, with combustibles provided for that purpose; the magazines of pitch, tar, and other naval stores, suffered the same fate. A dreadful scene of conflagration soon took place, the flames continuing to rage the whole night without the least attempt from the garrison of any opposition. Preparations were now made for laying siege to the town; but the Duke, having received advice of a large force of the enemy collected to cut off his retreat, and being informed that the siege would take up a month, for which the army was said not to be provided, he ordered the whole of the forces to strike their tents and return to Concale. The King, says Walpole, said to Lord Waldegrave, "I never had any opinion of it: we shall brag of having burnt their ships,

and they of having driven us away." "It was said," he adds, "his grace and his troops remarked that Lord George Sackville was not among the first to court danger, and that Howe, who never made a friendship but at the mouth of a cannon, had conceived and expressed a strong avêrsion to him. Indeed," he says, "they agreed so ill, that one day Lord George, putting several questions to Howe, and receiving no answer, said, 'Mr. Howe, don't you hear me? I have asked you several questions.' Howe in his reply gave a true specimen of the 'characteristics of his race,' 'I don't love questions.'" Churchill has the following couplet on the Sackville family:

> "Sackvilles alone anticipate defeat,
> And, ere they dare the battle, sound retreat."

The troops were now re-embarked, and orders given to hold themselves in readiness to land as soon as they should reach Granville Bay, distant about six leagues from St. Maloes; but the weather was so bad that it was deemed prudent to return to Concale Bay. For several days it continued wet and boisterous with westerly gales, by which the squadron was driven far out to sea until the coast of the Isle of Wight was visible. On clearing up a little, they stood back for the French coast, and made it about Havre, where it was intended to land; and the Duke of Marlborough and Commodore Howe embarked in a small cutter to examine the shore and the state of the adjacent country. Nothing, how-

ever, was attempted here, nor does any report appear to have been made by Howe to the Admiralty; he having in fact received his instructions from Mr. Pitt. The whole fleet, on the 29th of June, bore away before the wind for Cherburg, and anchored at the distance of about two miles from the town. Six different batteries fired upon the transports, but without effect; troops in considerable numbers lined the beach. The Duke of Marlborough determined to land, while the frigates and bombs played upon the forts of Querqueville, L'Homet, and Gullet; but the preparations for these purposes were discontinued, in consequence of a violent gale of wind that sprung up suddenly, and rendered a landing utterly impracticable. The gale continued to increase and blew directly into the bay; the transports in working out ran foul of each other, and with great difficulty escaped shipwreck on a lee-shore. It was, therefore, determined to make the best of their way to the English coast; and on the 1st of July the whole fleet arrived at St. Helens, just one month after their departure from that anchorage.

The return of this expedition, unproductive of any advantage, either to the nation or the persons employed on it, fulfilled at least the prediction which George II. had pronounced upon it. But, mortifying as it must have been to the minister who planned it, the utter failure did not deter him from immediately following it up by another, and a third attempt, to

harass the enemy's coast, and destroy his ports, harbours, and public property of every kind that should be found accessible. This was the ostensible object, and the only one much cared about by the public at large. But Mr. Pitt had still other objects in view besides the work of destruction, which was, indeed, considered by all sensible men as, in itself, unworthy the reputation of a power like England. The continental war was popular with the king and the administration, and the successes on the Rhine, together with the capture of Dusseldorf, encouraged the sending out an immediate reinforcement of British troops, in order to penetrate into the enemy's country, while a powerful descent on his coast could not fail to distract his operations, and draw off a portion of his army for its protection. Prince Ferdinand declared repeatedly to Mr. Pitt that these expeditions were of the greatest benefit, by dividing the attention of the troops of France—"an affirmation," says Walpole, "of so little truth, that the Duke of Marlborough, in the hurry of their retreat, having left his silver tea-spoons behind him, the Duc d'Aiguillon, politely to mark contempt, sent them him by a cartel ship."

The Duke of Marlborough and Lord George Sackville were pretty well sickened with their late cruise, but not more so than Howe was by being encumbered with their assistance. These great officers felt no disposition to continue their services in combined operation with the navy on the coast of France, but

willingly enough undertook to convey the forces destined for the continent, which were placed under the Duke's immediate command, to be united to the army of Prince Ferdinand as Commander-in-Chief.

Though there does not appear to have been the slightest disagreement of any kind between the military officers employed on the last expedition and the naval Commodore, who was a man of that equal temper not to be disturbed by trifling annoyances, nor to give umbrage to those whom his instructions directed him to receive on board his ship; yet the desertion of these great men, on the present occasion, gave a sort of discouraging tone among the officers of the army, and particularly those of high rank, against embarking on combined expeditions; nor were they backward in proclaiming their unwillingness to connect themselves with the naval service. So great, indeed, appears to have been the difficulty of procuring a Commander-in-Chief for the new naval expedition, or rather the continuation of the old one, that the minister found himself reduced to the necessity of sending for a general officer from Ireland, nearly worn out with age, of no talents, but of unquestioned bravery, unaccustomed to much active service, and especially the kind of service in contemplation. Lieutenant-General Bligh was ordered to proceed forthwith to London, and not a little surprised when informed of what was intended; but, like a true old soldier, he felt it his duty, from principle, not to

decline the offer, though he had never before been employed on any similar active service.

Commodore Howe, whose broad pendant continued to fly in the Essex, was reappointed to the command; and such was the activity he displayed in putting the squadron into a fit state for service at sea, and in refitting and provisioning the transports, which had suffered very materially by the bad weather when off Cherburg, that he reported the whole fleet ready to sail within one month after their return to St. Helens. The Lieutenant-General was also ready to embark the moment he should receive his instructions. On this occasion, another personage, of no small importance, embarked on board the Essex, for the purpose of being placed under the special charge of Commodore Howe, by order of the King. This was no other than Prince Edward Augustus, Duke of York, then in his nineteenth year; with the view of being instructed in the duties of the service as a midshipman. Useless, and something more than useless, as such a person must have been in the Commodore's ship, it was, nevertheless, a marked proof of the confidence and high estimation in which the King held Captain Howe.

The instructions received from the King, through the Secretary of State, point specifically to the destruction of Cherburg. "Our will and pleasure is, that you do exert your utmost endeavours to land, if it should be found practicable, with the troops under your command, at or near Cherburg, on the coast of

Normandy, and to attack the batteries, forts, and town of Cherburg; and in case, by the blessing of God upon our arms, the said place shall be carried, and that our troops shall be able to maintain themselves there a competent time for demolishing and destroying the port and basin, together with all the ships, naval stores and works, batteries, fortifications, arsenals, and magazines, thereunto belonging, you are to use all possible means, effectually to demolish and destroy the same, &c.;" and they are further directed, should the attack on Cherburg not succeed, "to carry a warm alarm along the coast of France, from the easternmost point of Normandy, as far westward as Morlaix inclusive."

Against Cherburg then, Commodore Howe, with his squadron and transports, set sail from St. Helens on the 1st of August, just one month after his return to that anchorage from the late expedition. On the 6th they arrived in Cherburg road, late in the evening, and the bombs began immediately to play upon the town; but the next morning it was thought expedient that the fleet and transports should proceed to the bay of Marais, two leagues west of Cherburg, where a more secure landing might be effected, and then, if successful, march to Cherburg, and attack the works in the rear. Here, however, they were opposed by about 3000 of the enemy, horse and foot, posted behind the sand-banks, with the apparent intention of disputing the landing of the English. Dispositions, however, were immediately made for

landing, and the Guards and Grenadiers, in flat-bottomed boats, succeeded in effecting it under cover of a smart fire from the frigates, bombs, and smaller vessels. General Drury attacked the enemy with such spirit and vigour, that the French quitted their post, and were pursued with great slaughter, with the loss of only twenty men killed and wounded on the side of the pursuers. The horse and artillery having landed, the following morning, without molestation, the army formed and marched forward in two columns to Cherburg, which they entered, and took possession of without opposition, the garrison having abandoned the place on the approach of the British troops. On the 9th, Commodore Howe announces to the Admiralty the surrender of the town on the previous day, on the arrival of the troops before it; and that the forts and batteries along the coast were deserted as they advanced; and he adds, "I moved the fleet this morning to Cherburg road, to be assisting in the further operation of the troops, as the Lieutenant-General may recommend."

These operations terminated in the complete destruction of the basins, and two piers forming the entrance into the harbour; of the harbour itself, so as to leave it in a state incapable of receiving ships of war of any size; the demolition of all the batteries, forts, and magazines there, as well as those along the coast; the burning of all the ships in the harbour, which amounted to about thirty sail: thus effectually

completing the King's instructions as to Cherburg. The quantity of iron cannon and mortars was immense, all of which were destroyed. Twenty-two brass ordnance, and three brass mortars, with about one hundred pieces of cannon, were brought away. The different kinds of ammunition—shells, shot, and powder—were destroyed or thrown into the sea. While these operations were going on, several skirmishes took place at a short distance inland, where the French had formed, in one of which, Captain Lindsey, one of the most active, brave, and intelligent among the officers of the Light Horse, was wounded by a musket shot, of which he died, universally lamented.

Conformably with his instructions, the Commander-in-chief considered Granville ought to be the next object of attack; but as Cherburg no longer required any forces to protect it, and as it was known that 10,000 of the enemy had been assembled in Normandy, who could easily advance to that neighbourhood, the intention of attacking Granville was abandoned. Morlaix would have been the next place, but advices were received from England, that a large body of men had assembled at Brest, and in the vicinity, ready to oppose any descent on that part of the coast. The Commodore and General, therefore, thought they should best fulfil the King's instructions by landing the troops at the bay of St. Lunaire, and marching them against St. Maloes, being about two leagues to the

eastward of that place. In proceeding thither, the fleet and transports were driven, by contrary winds, into Weymouth Roads, from whence they weighed the following day; but owing to the badness of the weather, it was the 3rd of September before they came to anchor in St. Lunaire Bay. Next day the troops landed without opposition, and encamped on an eminence. Commodore Howe went on shore, taking with him Prince Edward, and they accompanied the General to a village about three miles from St. Maloes, to reconnoitre the position which he meant to take up. The young Prince who, on his first joining the Essex, had requested the Commodore that on all such occasions he might be at his side, could not well be refused permission to accompany him on this excursion; but it is said to have nearly proved fatal to his Royal Highness; for the enemy, being apprized of the visit, plied them with cannon shot, one of which dropped close to the feet of the Prince. In this little expedition he was obliged to pass a night with the Commodore in a miserable hovel, and slept on a bundle of straw—a great change from the downy beds of a palace.

The boisterous state of the weather made it dangerous for the fleet to remain in St. Lunaire Bay, and the Commodore apprized the General that it would be absolutely necessary to move them round to St. Cas Bay, where alone the troops could with safety re-embark, if necessary; there being at that

place a sandy beach, and shelter from the westerly gales. It was, therefore, unanimously resolved to give up the intended attack on St. Maloes, and that the army should begin their march the following day for St. Cas. On this march they were considerably harassed by small parties concealed in the woods and villages, and several officers and men were killed and wounded. The General sent a friar to acquaint the commanding officer of the enemy, that if they did not desist, he would reduce all the villages he passed into ashes; no answer was returned, and the General, therefore, gave orders to burn and destroy every place in their march. On reaching Martignon, the General intended to encamp there, with a view to carry the remainder of his Majesty's instructions into effect, by creating all the alarm he could in the country, and thereby calling off troops from Germany, as those instructions pointed out to him. He discovered, however, from some deserters, that the enemy was encamped about two leagues off, in great strength, having been collected from different parts of the province, and that they meant to give the English battle the next morning. It afterwards appeared they amounted to upwards of 10,000 men, under the command of the Duc d'Aguillon.

On learning this the General sent his aid-de-camp to the Commodore, to acquaint him of his intention to march forthwith, and to embark the troops

as soon as they could be received. It was said to be the plan of the French to cut them off in their march to the ships, but they met with little interruption until they reached the beach, and saw the Commodore provided with all his squadron and transports ready to receive them. Presently, however, the advanced parties of the French appeared on the high grounds, but did not attempt to molest the embarkation until they saw they might attack with success the reduced number of troops remaining on the beach, when they brought their field-pieces to bear, and a shocking carnage ensued, not only on shore, but in the flat-bottomed boats, though Commodore Howe exerted himself to the utmost to cover them by an incessant fire from his frigates, sloops, and bombs. The General in his dispatch says, the rear-guard, (the three companies of the first regiment included,) consisted of about 1400 men, of whom were missing about 700, and of those between 400 and 500 were prisoners. A great number of officers were killed, among whom was General Drury, and many more were taken prisoners, and in these was included Lord Frederick Cavendish of the Guards.

On this trying occasion the conduct of Howe was eminently conspicuous. The grenadiers had nothing left for it but to escape with all speed to the boats or remain to be killed; they were ordered, therefore, to make to the shore as quickly as possible. A bat-

tery, thrown up on the hill, shattered several of the boats to pieces. As some of these approached the shore, many of the seamen were killed or wounded, which so intimidated the rowers, that they hesitated to proceed, and lay upon their oars. Howe observing this, and suspecting the cause of their backwardness, jumped into his barge, rowed into the midst of the fire of shot and shells, and standing upright in the boat, waved the seamen to follow him; his example animated their depressed spirits; no one now thought of shrinking, but all strived who could pick up the greatest number of poor fellows, some swimming, others wading into the sea. One of the historians of the war, the Reverend John Entick, compares the gallant behaviour of Howe, appropriately enough, to Achilles staying the flying Greeks.

> "So when the Grecians to their navy fled,
> High o'er the trench, Achilles rear'd his head,
> Greece, for one glance of that tremendous eye,
> Strait took new courage, and disdain'd to fly;
> Troy saw aghast the living lightning's play,
> And turn'd their eye-balls from the flashing ray."

It has been stated that the young Prince leaped into the boat with Howe, but the latter desired him to get back on board, as the service he was going on was one of great danger, and that the charge he had of his personal safety might distract his attention from the urgent business on hand. The Prince reluctantly obeyed; he had been on shore at the commencement of the retreat. The same writer, who was

personally acquainted with Commodore Howe, says, the Duke of Newcastle remonstrated with George II., on the dangers to which the Commodore had exposed his grandson, when the King rebuked him, by asking if he expected the boy to be properly brought up as a sailor, without incurring the dangers to which they are liable?

Of the 1400 men that composed the rear-guard thus exposed, the general has said that about 700 were missing, and about 400 prisoners; leaving therefore about 300 killed or drowned. Of these one major-general, one lieutenant-colonel, four captains, five lieutenants, were killed; and three lieutenant-colonels, ten captains, nine lieutenants, were made prisoners; of the navy, Captains Rowley, Maplesden, Paston, and Elphinstone, with Captain Duff, superintending the re-embarkation, were also taken prisoners.

"Such," says Walpole, "was the conclusion of Mr. Pitt's invasions of France, the idleness or fruitlessness of which took off from the judgment of his other attempts and successes; though, while this country exists in independence, not even his own ambition, which prompted his attempts, can detract from the merit of his undertaking, retrieving, re-establishing, the affairs of Britain."

General Bligh was the only sufferer after the return of the expedition. The cold reception he met with, and an intimation that he would not be re-

ceived by his Majesty, determined this high-minded officer to take the only step he deemed consistent with his feelings, which was this—that he could not hold his commission with honour, and, therefore, at once resigned it. Yet the capture and destruction of Cherburg, with the multitude of guns, mortars, ammunition, and warlike stores, was of much higher value to the nation than all that had been done in the two former expeditions; at least it would appear the minister thought so; for the great number of brass cannon, the brass mortars, some standards and other military implements, after being exhibited for some days in Hyde Park, for the amusement of the populace, who are always pleased to see something substantial for the money they pay in taxes, were then, with great pomp and ostentation, with flags and military music, drawn through the city and deposited at the Tower.

CHAPTER III.

VARIOUS SERVICES, CIVIL AND MILITARY.

Commodore Howe marries—His brother, the Earl Howe, is killed—His remuneration for the Duke of Marlborough and others—The equipment and reception of the Duke of York—Joins Sir Edward Hawke—Action with the fleet of Conflans—The Admiral's account of the battle very defective—Walpole's edition of it—Magnanime attached to the Channel fleet—Howe the first colonel of marines—Establishment and abolition of that and the generals of marines—George II. gives the first uniform to the navy—Howe flag captain to the Duke of York in the Princess Amelia—Fire in the Princess Amelia—Becomes a member of the Board of Admiralty—Treasurer of the navy—Advantages of these situations in a naval point of view—Lord Sandwich, an able First Lord of the Admiralty—His opinion as to timber and seamen—Howe purchases a place called Porters—Description of—Imitation of the Queen Charlotte's after-cabin—Round-sterns and stern-galleries.

THE year 1758 was an important era in the life of Commodore Howe, who had now attained the age of thirty-three, and had eminently established his character as a brave, active, and intelligent officer in the naval service. On the 10th of March of this year, having a few months' leave during the refit of his ship, he married Mary, daughter of Chiverton Hartop, Esquire, of Welby in the county of Leicester; and in the month of July of the same year Commodore Howe lost his elder brother, George

Augustus Viscount Howe. This brave officer, when serving under General Abercrombie in America, was killed in a skirmish in passing through a thick and almost impenetrable wood, in which was a French party laying in ambush. The British succeeded in killing 300 and taking 148 prisoners, with the loss only of two officers, and about eighteen men killed and wounded; but this success was purchased dearly by the death of Lord Howe, who fell the first man in the skirmish by a musket ball through his heart, of which he died instantly. Of the loss of this young and promising officer, General Abercrombie says, in his letter to the Secretary of State, "that he was deservedly and universally beloved and respected throughout the whole army; that his untimely fall occasioned much grief and consternation; and that he himself felt it most heavily, and lamented him most sincerely." On this melancholy news reaching the Dowager Lady Howe, she addressed the gentry, clergy, and freeholders of Nottingham (whom the deceased had represented in parliament) in favour of his next younger brother, Lieutenant-Colonel (afterwards General Sir William) Howe, to supply his place in the House of Commons; "permit me," she says, "to implore the protection of every one of you, as the mother of him whose life has been lost in the service of his country." The appeal was responded to, and Colonel Howe was returned to the seat of his late brother.

The Commodore, being the next of age, succeeded of course to the title and estate of the family, as Viscount Howe of Langar. Though his mother was still living, Lord Howe's pecuniary circumstances, which had hitherto been none of the most flourishing, became materially improved. In fact, he had almost subsisted on his pay as captain, and could have ill afforded, without some compensation, to entertain at his table the Duke of Marlborough, and the rest of the general officers, and their respective staffs, on the late expeditions to the coast of France. The payment he received appears incidentally from a letter of Lord Howe, written many years afterwards to Sir Roger Curtis, on the latter having been ordered to receive the Duke d'Artôis and his suite on board the Canada, with directions to accommodate him "in a manner suitable to his rank;" and as it mentions a curious circumstance connected with the late expeditions against France, an extract from it may not be inapplicable in this place.

"I postponed writing to you on the subject, concluding I should soon be informed by you of the particular manner in which the Prince was to be treated, and of the means in which the expense of such specially defined treatment was to be defrayed; my surprise was, therefore, great indeed to find by your letter received yesterday, that the appointment is made with no other specification of the sense of

government expressed, than as a matter of course." And after advising him to make a public or personal application to Lord Spencer, he adds:—

"When I commanded the maritime department on the expedition to the coast of France in 1758, the Duke of Marlborough, the Lieutenant-General Lord George Sackville, with their aides-de-camp, &c., to the number of fifteen or sixteen persons at my table, for breakfast, dinner, and supper daily, were ordered to be taken by me into the Essex. My pay being then nearly the whole of my income, application became necessary for some proportionate allowance to bear the expense of such disbursements; and one thousand pounds were deemed not inadequate to my situation. After the capture of Cherburg, this set of guests were ordered to Flanders; and a new staff, little less in number, together with the late Duke of York, replaced them. It is true I was not told how to provide for His Royal Highness; and all the answer I could obtain from ministerial authority respecting the treatment of, and conduct towards, the prince, was limited to an instruction that I was to act respecting him, just as if I had not any such person on board the ship. He came, not only without bed, and linen almost of every kind, but I paid also for his uniform clothes, which I provided for him, with all other necessaries, at Portsmouth. I made no inquiries how I was to be indemnified for every requisite attention to the then presumptive heir to the crown. When the

operations terminated, unsuccessfully as you know, by the defeat of our troops at St. Cas, and I resumed my private character as Captain in the fleet, the assigned allowance for the first embarkation was all it was thought fit to think of for me." Lord Howe, in speaking of Monsieur in the same letter, says, "I much pity the unfortunate man's situation, as you represent his feelings and character. Though dissipated as he has always been described, I should not have thought a change of circumstances less in the extreme, would make any impression so much to his advantage. He ought to make an exemplary sovereign, if he ever attains that elevation."

In the case of the Duke of York we have a pretty specimen of the economical mode then in practice, of launching forth into the world a young prince, the heir presumptive to the throne. Captain Howe having equipped his young *élève* in the true Portsmouth fashion, the captains of the navy then present attended him in their boats on board, where they were severally introduced to the young midshipman. An anecdote is told, which being highly characteristic of the true simplicity of seamen, is not unlikely to have occurred. A sailor standing with some others on the forecastle, and observing what was going on, whispered his messmate, "the young gentleman a'nt over civil as I thinks: look, if he don't keep his hat on before all the captains!" "Why, you stupid lubber," replied the other, "where should he larn

manners, seeing as how he never was at sea before?"

Another illustrious prince, His Royal Highness William Henry, (our late gracious king,) was sent by George III. into the navy on board the Prince George, in which the flag of Admiral Digby was flying, on the 15th of June 1779. On the 19th of that month an order was given to the Navy Board to issue to the Admiral one thousand pounds, "to reimburse the expenses he may incur in entertaining His Royal Highness Prince William Henry;" on the 13th of May 1780, the like sum; and on the 24th of August 1781, the same; after which, until the expiration of six years of honest service before he was made a lieutenant, no further sums appear to have been issued. In 1780, Sir George Rodney took four Spanish line of battle ships under Admiral Langara, whom he sent in his flag ship, the Phœnix, to Gibraltar, where the Prince George then was. His Royal Highness after being introduced to the Spanish Admiral retired; and shortly afterwards, appearing in midshipman's uniform, he touched his hat to the Admiral Langara with "Sir, the boat is ready;" on which Langara observed, "Well does Great Britain merit the empire of the sea, when the humblest stations in her navy are supported by princes of the blood."

The expeditions to the French coast having terminated with the third unsuccessful attempt, Lord Howe returned to his old and favourite ship, the Magnanime,

in the month of June, and joined the fleet under the command of Sir Edward Hawke, then employed off Brest and in channel soundings; at the same time his royal pupil was appointed Captain of the Phœnix. While the Magnanime was refitting, Lord Howe told his brave fellows that their conduct had been so good and sailor-like since he had the pleasure of commanding them, that it was his intention, as soon as the ship was in harbour, to give each watch in turn a fortnight's leave of absence, being quite sure they would not abuse the indulgence. At this time, and indeed during the whole war, it was too much the case for the majority of Captains to refuse all leave to their crews, in consequence of which, as might naturally be expected, desertions were constantly occurring, and courts-martial and punishments frequent. The Magnanime did not lose a man. It was by this and other indulgences, which were soon known in the fleet, that Howe obtained the appellation of the "Sailor's friend."

From June to November Sir Edward Hawke continued to cruize off Brest, sending his ships occasionally into port to refit and replenish. On the 9th of the latter month a violent gale of wind forced him from his station, and obliged him to take shelter in Torbay, which was so far fortunate for the enemy, as during his absence a French squadron from the West Indies, under Monsieur de Bompart, got safe into Brest. The French Admiral, M. de Conflans,

who had been blockaded the whole summer, supposing that the English fleet had returned to port for the winter, put to sea on the 14th of November with twenty-one sail of the line, and on the same day Sir Edward Hawke sailed from Torbay with twenty-three sail of the line. The Gibraltar, on joining the Admiral, reported that she had seen the French fleet twenty-four leagues to the north-west of Belleisle, steering to the south-west. At half-past eight o'clock in the morning of the 20th of November, the Maidstone made the signal for seeing a fleet. "I had before," says Sir Edward, "sent the Magnanime ahead to make the land. At three quarters past nine she made the signal for an enemy. All the day we had very fresh gales at north-west, with heavy squalls. M. Conflans kept going off under such sail as all his squadron could carry, and at the same time keep together. At half-past two, P.M., the fire beginning ahead, I made the signal for engaging. About four o'clock the Formidable struck, and a little after the Thesée and Superbe were sunk. About five L'Heros struck, but, it blowing hard, no boat could be sent on board her." The Admiral then says, "that night coming on, and being on a part of the coast among islands and shoals, of which we were totally ignorant, without a pilot, as was the greatest part of the squadron, and blowing hard on a lee shore, I made the signal to anchor."

All night long guns of distress were fired, but

none knew whether by friends or enemies, and whether some of them were not intended as signals. At daybreak it was discovered that Conflans' ship, the Soleil Royale, had anchored among the English fleet: she immediately cut, and with L'Heros run ashore to the westward of Crozie. A signal was made for the Essex to pursue, but she got ashore among the rocks, where the Resolution already was, and both were irrecoverably lost; the remains of both ships were set on fire. "Thus," says Sir Edward Hawke, "what loss we have sustained has been owing to the weather, not the enemy, seven or eight of whose line-of-battle ships got to sea, I believe, in the night of the action." On the 22nd the Admiral sent three of his ships to destroy the Soleil Royale and Heros; but the French set the first on fire, and our people did the same with the second. He gives all praise to the conduct of the Captains whose ships could get up with and engage the enemy, but, according to the fashion of the day, he particularises none; not even the part that each ship sustained in the action. The loss he says in the ships now with him amounts only to one lieutenant, 39 seamen and marines killed, and about 202 wounded; of which it appears the Magnanime had 13 killed and 66 wounded; among the former was second-lieutenant Price. "As to the loss we have sustained," says the Admiral, "let it be placed to the account of the necessity I was under of running all risk to break this strong force of the enemy: had we had but two

hours more daylight, the whole had been totally destroyed or taken, for we were almost up with their van when night overtook us."

Though the Admiral mentions no officer in particular, yet it is well known that Lord Howe in the Magnanime was the leading ship, and the following extract from her log proves that it was he who attacked the Rear-Admiral's ship, the Formidable:— "Bore down to attack the Rear-Admiral, and fired upon him accordingly; but failing in our attempt to board him, by the slow wearing of the ship for want of head sails, and falling to leeward of him, and when brought up again to the wind, to take the advantage of engaging him in that situation, the Montague and Warspite driving together on board of us, and forcing us still farther to leeward of the French rear, stood away therefore, being disengaged from them, after another of the enemy's ships." This other was the Thesée, which the Magnanime attacked so furiously as to compel her to strike; and a sudden squall coming on, and her lower deck ports not being shut, she filled and instantly sunk; one account however states that the Magnanime ran down upon the Thesée and compelled her immediately to strike, but being near the shore she drove on the rocks and went to pieces; this is not correct. Nothing can be more vague and unsatisfactory than the mode in which Commanders-in-Chief in those days reported naval battles, seldom giving them with an approach even to

accuracy. Horace Walpole, who generally obtained whatever reports were current in the offices and about the court, gives the following account:—"Lord Howe who attacked the Formidable, bore down on her with such violence, that her prow forced in his lower tier of guns. Captain Digby in the Dunkirk received the fire of twelve of the enemy's ships, and lost not a man. Keppel's was full of water, and he thought it sinking: a sudden squall emptied his ship, but he was informed all his powder was wet. 'Then,' said he, 'I am sorry I am safe.' They came and told him a small quantity was undamaged—'Very well,' said he, 'then attack again.' Not above eight of our ships were engaged in obtaining this decisive victory." This may rather be considered as the talk of the day than as correct history, but where are we to get anything better? The wetting of the powder, however, in Keppel's ship appears to be true.

During the year 1760 Lord Howe, in the Magnanime, was attached to the Channel fleet, and sailed with Sir Edward Hawke on the 1st of September to relieve Admiral Boscawen in Quiberon Bay; and on the 4th he was detached with the Bedford and Prince Frederick to dispossess the French of the island of Dumet, the governor of which surrendered after a faint resistance. The possession of this island was considered of great importance to the Channel fleet, having a good watering place, by means of which a saving was effected of the enormous expense and in-

convenience of employing transports to carry over water from England for the supply of the ships.

The reputation of Commodore Howe was now so firmly established, and his services so universally acknowledged, that the nation and the government looked up to him when any naval operations of moment were contemplated. On being introduced to George II. by Sir Edward Hawke, his Majesty is said to have expressed the high sense he entertained of his conduct in words to this effect: "My Lord Howe, your life has been a continued series of services to your country." The Admiralty also, desirous of marking their estimation of his services, conferred on him, in March 1760, the appointment of Colonel of the Chatham division of Royal Marines. He was the first officer that had ever held a commission under this new establishment, which was only created by the King's Order in Council in February of the same year; the three Generals of Marines having been established in the latter end of the preceding year. These appointments, which were almost the only boons given to naval officers for distinguished services, during the reign of George II., or indeed since, no longer exist, having been swept away a few years ago among the rest of sinecure offices, to which class they unquestionably belonged. The original professed intention, however, was to make them efficient, and not sinecures. The Lords of the Admiralty state, in their memorial to the King, that the marines having been augmented

to one hundred and thirty companies, of one hundred and twenty-three private men each, amount in the whole to eighteen thousand and ninety-two men, with very few officers, they think it necessary, in order to preserve discipline and regularity among so great a body of men, that some officers of rank in the navy should be appointed to assist therein, who may frequently review them, both afloat and ashore, to see they are kept in constant order for service, and regularly provided with clothing, arms, and accoutrements; likewise to inquire into the conduct and behaviour of the officers, and make their reports to the Board. Had this avowed intention been carried into effect, some plea might have been urged before the Committee to prevent the annihilation of these few appointments.

No one officer, however, ever thought of visiting any of the divisions of marines on so invidious a service, for such it must have been considered by the superior marine officers; nor, indeed, was any one ever directed to do so by the Admiralty. It may therefore be concluded, that the reasons stated in the memorial were for no other purpose than merely to give a colour to the establishment of a boon, intended for a certain limited number of distinguished naval officers; and in this light it was viewed by the Parliamentary Committee, appointed to inquire into the nature of the several sinecure offices. No abuse however appears to have been complained of in making the

selection, from Howe down to our own times. The Committee at the same time recommended that the amount of the pay, attached to the seven marine commissions, should be distributed by his Majesty to such deserving officers of the navy, as the Lords of the Admiralty should recommend. This may be a very useful measure, if properly distributed among deserving and distressed objects; but a mere pecuniary grant is but a poor substitute for the distinction which the appointments conveyed, and the grace which they gave to the boon. Perhaps it is not quite correct to say, as it has been said, that George II. conferred no distinction on the navy—he gave them what they had not hitherto had, a fixed uniform dress. From the portraits in the Naval Gallery in Greenwich Hospital, Mr. Locker has furnished an amusing account of the various modes in which our old gallant Admirals were clothed. Some of these ancient heroes, at one of their clubs, resolved "that a uniform dress is useful and necessary for commissioned officers, agreeable to the practice of other nations;" and a committee was appointed to wait on the Duke of Bedford, then First Lord of the Admiralty. Admiral Forbes was finally selected to this office: he was shown into a room surrounded with dresses. On being asked which he thought the most appropriate, he said, "one with red and blue, or blue and red, as these were our national colours." "No," replied his Grace, "the King has settled it otherwise; he saw

my duchess riding in the park a few days ago, in a habit of blue faced with white, which took the fancy of his Majesty, and he has ordered it as the uniform of the Royal Navy;" and in 1748 it was established accordingly. We have kept the blue and the white till within a few years back, but now red has superseded the white, and thus his late Majesty William IV. restored us to our "national colours."

His Royal Highness the Duke of York was raised to the rank of Rear-Admiral of the Blue, and hoisted his flag on board the Princess Amelia of 80 guns. He immediately requested that his former commander might be appointed his Flag-Captain, and Lord Howe gave up his favourite ship, the Magnanime, to join that of his Royal Highness, for which purpose he was relieved from his station in Basque Roads, where he had been acting as Commodore of a powerful squadron, to watch the motions of the French fleet at Rochfort. While in the Princess Amelia, a circumstance occurred which, though trifling in itself, furnished an instance of that cool and unruffled conduct of Lord Howe, which was conspicuous on all occasions where danger existed or was apprehended. While asleep in his cabin, the lieutenant of the watch suddenly going up to his bedside called out, in apparent agitation, "My Lord, the ship is on fire close to the magazine; but don't be frightened, my Lord, it will soon be got under." "Frightened, Sir, what do you mean by that? I never was frightened in my life;"

and looking the lieutenant full in the face, he said to him, coolly, "Pray, Sir, how does a man feel when he is frightened? I need not ask how he looks. I will be with you immediately; but take care that his Royal Highness is not disturbed." There is another story told of his coolness and presence of mind. When captain of the Magnanime, a gale of wind on a lee-shore, off the coast of France, induced him to anchor. In the course of the night it blew tremendously, but Howe having made all snug with two anchors ahead, went off deck to his cabin, where he took up a book; presently, however, the lieutenant of the watch came down in great haste, and with a face of woe said, "I am sorry to inform you, my Lord, that the anchors are coming home." "They are much in the right," replied Howe, coolly, "I don't know who would stay abroad such a night as this."

In the summer of this year a large fleet was fitted out, under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Hardy, to which the Princess Amelia was attached. Sir Charles proceeded to the westward on the 12th September, and on the 29th was joined by a reinforcement under the Duke of York. No brilliant exploits in general actions occurred in the course of this year; though numerous distinguished services were performed by single ships, in different parts of the world. The war, in fact, seemed to languish; the French had met with such ill success, both at home and in the colonies, and the English had so long

complained of the duration of hostilities, that the preliminaries of a general peace were signed at Fontainbleau in November, and ratified on the 10th February 1763, and proclaimed in London on 22nd of that month. The great fleets, of course, were paid off, and Commodore Lord Howe struck his broad pendant and came on shore. His young pupil, recently his commanding officer, found it expedient, on account of declining health, to proceed to a warm climate; and took his passage in the Centurion, commanded by Commodore Harrison, for the Mediterranean. In September 1767, he died at Monaco: his corpse was brought to England and deposited in the royal vault in King Henry VII.'s Chapel, in Westminster Abbey.

It is not likely that an officer of Lord Howe's active mind, who had spent twenty-four years of his life almost uninterruptedly at sea, should be content to sit down quietly on shore divested of all command. Employment he could not want, as he had for some time past made the theory and practice of navigation, naval tactics, a system of signals and the evolutions of a fleet, the great objects of his study. He had experienced the importance of some well-known system of signals, the want of which was so seriously felt in the action of Sir E. Hawke with Conflans. The night signal for anchoring was a certain number of guns, but the two fleets being intermixed, the signal-guns and guns of distress were also so mingled,

that many of our ships, not being able to distinguish the one from the other, kept under way, and in the morning the fleet was completely dispersed; fortunately the same thing happened to that of the enemy. It may be supposed, therefore, that an officer of Howe's character and qualifications would at any time be acceptable as one of the Lords of the Admiralty; and that, whether he sought or was sought for to fill that situation, the very circumstance of being a member of that Board must have been entirely congenial with his feelings, as he would then have an opportunity of advancing his favourite schemes, and of being made acquainted with what had been previously proposed by others, and with the results of the several experiments whether favourable or otherwise. Whatever concerns the navy—the improvements in the hulls, masts, yards and rigging of ships—all suggestions for the maintenance of the health and comfort of the sailors—all matters relating to discipline—systems of naval tactics, evolutions and signals—all information on these and other subjects connected with the navy—centre in the Board of Admiralty. No wonder, then, that Lord Howe cheerfully accepted a seat at the Board, in 1763, under the able administration of Lord Sandwich, a man of first-rate abilities, and one of the most active and well informed that had ever filled the high office of First Lord of the Admiralty. He remained, however, in this office but a very short time after Howe

joined it, when he was succeeded by Lord Egmont with whom Lord Howe continued until June 1765, when the latter left it to fill the important office of Treasurer of the Navy, at that time most important, as all the moneys expended on naval services passed through the Treasurer's hands; whereas now, the Treasurer, or rather Paymaster, has not the power nor the means of commanding a single shilling. This office he retained until August 1770, when he was relieved from it by the appointment of Sir Gilbert Elliot.

The situation of a junior Lord of the Admiralty, though most useful to a professional member, by enabling him to become acquainted with every kind of information connected with the naval service, is not one calculated to bring an officer's talents, be they what they may, before the eye of the public, especially if he should not have a seat in Parliament; nor even then, unless he should take an active share, in the House, of the business of the department, which was not the case with regard to Lord Howe; for although he held a seat for Dartmouth, during the whole time he was in the two offices, it does not appear that he took any part in the debates. In the Admiralty he employed himself on a code of Naval Instructions, which at that time had received only some slight alteration from those of 1746, which were little better than those usually known as "the fighting instructions of the Duke of York." An officer of Howe's high character in the

service, not merely for undaunted bravery, which many others possessed in common, but also for his nautical skill and knowledge, must have been invaluable to Lord Sandwich, and still more so to Lord Egmont; the latter of whom, in particular, could not be supposed to know much of naval matters, and must have stood in need of that able assistance which Lord Howe was fully competent to afford him.

Lord Sandwich was not only an able man, but having himself been one of the members of the Board under the Duke of Bedford, had time and opportunity of becoming well acquainted with naval affairs. He succeeded the Duke as First Lord of the Admiralty on 16th February 1747, and continued in that office until the 22nd June 1751. He served a second time as First Lord from April 1763, to September of the same year; and a third time from January 1771, to March 1782. By his several visitations of the dock-yards, and other naval establishments, he was enabled to make many salutary regulations in all those departments. The observations and the hints for improvements, laid down in the journals kept by himself of these visitations, are exceedingly judicious, and are among the very few documents left in the Admiralty by First Lords, on quitting office, where they are carefully bound up in volumes. This salutary practice since his time appears unfortunately to have been discontinued; it would indeed be in vain now to look for any private

minutes or papers of First Lords, however intimately connected with the naval service, or advantageous, as occasionally they might be, to their successors.

One extract from the visitation minutes of Lord Sandwich, in 1749, may be quoted as a specimen applicable to the present and indeed to all times. He says that "considering the very severe services on which our fleets were employed during the last war, and the great number of them that were consequently worn out in actual service at sea, it seems to me rather to be wondered that we have so many good ships still in our ports, than that (as we were obliged to build in every port of the kingdom where a ship could be set up, and to build with green timber or not build at all) we should have met with some of them which have not lasted so long as *we wished* they should; for I am persuaded many of them have lasted longer than we had reason to expect they would." [How applicable is this to the necessity which compelled the late Lord Melville to contract for building what a Lord of the Admiralty facetiously called the *Forty Thieves!*]

His Lordship continues: "Another great and capital point to be attended to, with regard to the future equipment of our fleet, is the want of men; every law that has lately been made on this subject has put us under fresh difficulties; the first object of *fashion*, as has lately appeared, is to dispute the legality of pressing, which, though odious in many particulars,

is, I am positive, the only method, in these times, by which there is any possibility of manning the fleet. In short, timber and seamen are all that are wanting to make our fleet invincible; if there are any who are base enough to wish to distress their country on these capital points, I hope government will always have strength sufficient to withstand their evil purposes; and that they will continue to be held in that detestation which is due to such inveterate enemies to the public weal."

Before Lord Howe was called to the Admiralty, it would appear that his intention was to prosecute his studies quietly at a place he had purchased in Hertfordshire, not far from St. Albans, called Porters; between which, and his house in Grafton-street, adjoining one held by his mother and sister, he divided his time during the remaining part of his life when on shore. George Mason, joint-proprietor of Porters, who afterwards published what he calls "The Life of Richard Earl Howe," speaks of his acquaintance with the noble Lord, in consequence of his "purchase of an assemblage of stately groves with their thickets, far descending lawns, and delightfully extensive views, constituting altogether the beauty of a Hertfordshire seat—then dignified by coming into the possession of so illustrious an owner, who, when free from official avocations, made it his principal residence for the remainder of his life." Porter's Lodge is an irregular-built house,

beautifully placed on an eminence, in a small but pleasant park, commanding fine and extensive prospects to the westward and northward, the ground on both sides declining from the house. Lord Howe made several alterations from time to time, and among others, in later years, built and fitted up a library, resembling in its shape and arrangements the cabin of the Queen Charlotte, his flag-ship in the battle of the 1st of June. Before this was done, he frequently regretted, when on shore, the walks he used to enjoy in the spacious gallery of his favourite three-decker. That accommodation, in his Majesty's ships, has of late years been grievously abridged by the introduction of round sterns, under the surveyorship of Sir Robert Seppings, which, though giving unquestionable additional strength to the after-part of a ship, by carrying up the timbers on the same system as those at the fore-part, greatly diminishes the beauty of the old overhanging sterns.

Lord Howe was esteemed a most correct and accurate man in all money transactions, whether in public or private life. His accounts, when treasurer of the navy, were clearly stated, and the balance regularly brought up, which was not always the case, either before or since; he is said also to have established many salutary regulations regarding the payment of seamen's wages and prize-money. In this office he continued, until in 1770 he received his promotion to the rank of rear-admiral.

CHAPTER IV.

AMERICAN COMMAND.

Lord Howe nominated, but not appointed, to command the Mediterranean fleet—His speeches in Parliament, as member for Dartmouth—Obtains an increase of half-pay for captains in the navy—Appointed commander-in-chief of the American station—Gets acquainted with Dr. Franklin while in England—Their correspondence—Action of Sir Peter Parker—The two brothers publish their declaration—Lord Howe writes to Washington, who returns his letter—Writes to Franklin, without any good effect—A committee of Congress wait on Lord Howe—No result from it—Accident by firing a salute, court-martial, and proceedings thereon—The Hon. Henry Blackwood's case—Arrival of Count d'Estaing's fleet—Howe seeks him in order to give battle—A violent gale of wind—Effects of it on the two fleets—Action of the Isis of 50 guns with the Cæsar of 74—Letter of Captain Raynor describing it—D'Estaing, with his crippled fleet, takes refuge in Boston—Howe resigns his command to Admiral Byron—His brother had previously resigned to Sir Henry Clinton—A tournament given on the occasion—Character of Lord Howe—Contracts a friendship, which ceases only with his death.

On Lord Howe's resignation of the Treasurership of the Navy, in October 1770, he was promoted, with six others, to the rank of rear admiral of the blue, and, on the 26th of November of the same year, appointed Commander-in-chief of a squadron to be employed in the Mediterranean, on the probability of a rupture with Spain; and the Barfleur was ordered to be fitted for his flag. Long discussions

were at this time carrying on with that power, respecting the occupation and sovereignty of a group of bleak, barren, desolate, and uninhabited islands, situated in the cold and stormy latitudes of the Southern Atlantic, called the Falkland Islands. The affair however was patched up by treaty, which allows Great Britain to retain possession, and Spain the sovereignty, of these islands; and the former having gained this point, abandoned them altogether as speedily as possible. Recently however they have been claimed by a puny government, which calls itself the republic of Buenos Ayres, regardless of which, the British government has now resolved to establish and plant them as a colony. They contain many good harbours, are directly in the route round Cape Horn and, if we may judge from the circumstance of 30,000 head of cattle, found running wild upon one of them, the soil will prove not unfit for grazing, or even for cultivation.

No Mediterranean fleet therefore was fitted out, nor did Lord Howe at this time hoist his flag. Sir Edward Hawke however incurred the censure of many, for nominating so young an admiral to the command of so important a squadron; and he had intimation of a motion intended to be made in the House, for an address to his Majesty to inform the House, who had advised his Majesty to nominate Lord Howe, one of the junior rear-admirals, to such a command. The motion does not appear to have been

brought forward, but Sir Edward Hawke declared he was perfectly ready to meet it; that he held himself responsible as First Lord of the Admiralty for the appointments recommended to his Majesty, and equally ready to declare that he did advise the King to sanction the one in question. "I have tried my Lord Howe," said Sir Edward, "on most important occasions; he never asked me how he was to execute any service entrusted to his charge, but always went straight forward, and performed it."

Lord Howe at this time held a seat in Parliament for the borough of Dartmouth, in which he continued until 1782, when he was raised to the peerage of Great Britain. In this situation he may be said to have maintained the character given of him by Walpole, of being "as silent as a rock." He seldom spoke in the House, and when he did, on some naval question, contented himself by stating a fact, or giving an opinion. On some occasions however he spoke with effect, and carried his point. A motion, for instance, had been made and carried, that Mr. Morris be ordered to the bar of the House, for having snatched out of the messenger's hands the writ for the last election of a knight of the shire to serve in Parliament for the county of Monmouth, and for the delay in the execution of the said writ. It seems that hitherto all delinquents received the judgment of the House upon their knees. Lord Howe said, he thought the

House was so tied down by its customary way of punishment, on these occasions, that there seemed to be no medium of sentence between an absolute discharge and the reprimand on the knees; the former he thought too easy a measure, the latter one too disgraceful for a gentleman to suffer; and wished that some way might be hit upon to preserve the dignity of the House, and at the same time to prevent the offence being committed in future, but was much afraid there was none. Mr. Townsend on this moved as an amendment, that he be reprimanded on his legs, which was carried; and, by a standing order of the House, the ignominious practice of kneeling was discontinued.

The other occasion was one where the interests of his brother officers were deeply concerned. This was enough for Howe's interposition, and he exerted himself in their behalf so strenuously and with such good effect, that he succeeded in spite of the minister. In February 1773, Lord Howe acquainted the House, that he had a petition to present from the captains and commanders of the navy, for an increase of their half-pay. The noble lord admitted that he had not the consent of the Crown, but Lord North said, though he would not take advantage of the informality, he was, for the most cogent reasons, determined to oppose it through every stage. On the petition being read, there was for some time a general silence in the House, on account, as was supposed, of the modest and unpresuming terms in which it was

couched, considering the rank, and the high and acknowledged deserts, of the petitioners.

At length Lord Howe rose, and stated to the House, in the most moderate and guarded terms, the grounds on which the request of the petitioners was founded; he entered into a history of the manner of paying and providing for the captains of the navy, from the time of their first having a determined existence as a military body, to the establishment by which their pay was then regulated; gave an account of the provision made for this body of officers in the infant state of the navy; and the orders in council, by which it had from time to time been regulated, from the year 1667 down to 1715, when they were put on the footing they had continued ever since: by all which it appeared that, till the latter period, they were always highly rewarded by posts of considerable profit, by particular gratifications, or by an amount of half-pay double of what they were then receiving. His Lordship, therefore, moved, "that the petition be referred to the consideration of a committee; and that they do examine the matter thereof, and report the same to the House."

After a long and animated debate, in which the motion was supported by Captain Constantine Phipps, Sir George Saville, Sir Gilbert Elliot, Sir William Meredith, Mr. Townsend, and several others, and opposed by Lord North, Mr. Charles Fox, and Mr. Welbore Ellice, the House divided, when there ap-

peared for Lord Howe's motion 154; and against it 45. A committee was accordingly named, and an able report drawn up, in which was given a detailed history of the half-pay from its first establishment, with the difficulties with which the gallant officers of the navy had to struggle on account of their scanty incomes, and it concluded with a recommendation that the prayer of the petitioners should be favourably considered. Lord Howe moved accordingly, and was seconded by Lord North, who observed he had opposed the petition chiefly on the idea that it would be a precedent for applications of a similar nature. The House then came to this resolution, "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to take into his consideration the deficiency of the allowance to several of the junior captains and commanders in his Majesty's navy, for their support when out of employment; and that he will direct such addition to be made thereto, proportioned to the present establishment for the senior captains, over and above the provision made for the (then) year 1773, as his Majesty in his great wisdom shall think fit."

In 1775 Lord Howe was promoted to the rank of rear-admiral of the white, and, on the general election which took place in that year, he was chosen to represent the borough of Dartmouth for the third time, having sat for the same place in the parliaments of 1762 and 1768; and for which he was

again re-elected a fourth time in 1780, and continued the representation of that borough as before stated, till he was raised to the peerage. It would appear that in this last election an attempt was made to throw him out; for in speaking, in one of his letters, of officers being encouraged by the Admiralty to interfere in a certain county election, as the road to advancement in their profession, he alludes to his own last election, and observes, "the virtue of the Dartmouth electors will or ought to be universally acknowledged, in that the attempts of power to divert their favourable purpose have proved ineffectual."

On the 7th of December 1775, Lord Howe was raised to the rank of vice-admiral of the blue, on a general flag promotion, which included six others. On the 15th of February 1776, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the North American station, and received a joint commission with his brother, General Sir William Howe, already there, to treat with the revolted Americans, and to take measures for the restoration of peace with the colonies. But however well disposed Lord Howe might be, and his conduct showed how desirous he was, to effect this purpose by conciliation and mutual concession, he must have left England without much hope of success; for, before he sailed, it was discovered that the French had dispatched emissaries to General Washington, the purport of which could not be mistaken. The ministers, indeed, no longer talked in

parliament of conciliation; *that* was all but impracticable, and they seemed to insinuate that concession would only add to their difficulties; in short, that no alternative now seemed to be left between absolute conquest and unconditional submission. Lord Howe's interviews with Dr. Franklin, when in England, were by no means encouraging. As, however, this intercourse took place at the end of 1774, it would almost seem as if Lord Howe had then been designated for the American command, and that a little plot was hatched by the ministry to entrap the Doctor to assist in persuading his revolted countrymen to return to their allegiance; but Franklin was too wary to be taken in. As this transaction is curious, and the chief actors were afterwards brought together in another hemisphere, it may be briefly stated here.

"In the beginning of November, 1774," says Franklin, "being at the Royal Society, Mr. Raper, one of the members, told me there was a certain lady who had a desire of playing with me at chess, fancying she could beat me, and had requested him to bring me to her: it was, he said, a lady with whose acquaintance he was sure I should be pleased, a sister of Lord Howe, and he hoped I would not refuse the challenge." Franklin promised to go if Mr. Raper would accompany him. "I went with him, played a few games with the lady, whom I found of very sensible conversation and pleasing behaviour, which

induced me to agree most readily to an appointment for another meeting a few days afterwards; though I had not the least apprehension that any political business could have any connexion with this new acquaintance."

He then says, that "on Christmas day visiting Mrs. Howe, she told me as soon as I went in, that her brother, Lord Howe, wished to be acquainted with me; that he was a very good man, and she was sure we should like each other. I said I had always heard a good character of Lord Howe, and should be proud of the honour of being known to him. He is just by, said she; will you give me leave to send for him? By all means, Madam, if you think proper. She rang for a servant, wrote a note, and Lord Howe came in a few minutes."

Franklin speaks in high terms of the courteous manner in which his Lordship received him; he said that, beside the general motives for his desiring an acquaintance with him, he had a particular one at this time, which was the alarming situation of our affairs with America, which no one, he was persuaded, understood better than Dr. Franklin: said he was sensible he had been very ill treated by the ministry; that he had much disapproved of their conduct towards him; that some of them, he was sure, were ashamed of it, and sorry it had happened; that he was unconnected with the ministry, except by some personal friendships; that he was merely an

independent member of parliament, desirous of doing what good he could, agreeably with his duty in that station: and after many more general observations as to the possibility of bringing about a reconciliation through the medium of a communication by him (Lord Howe), with the ministry, he concluded, says Franklin, by observing that "being himself upon no ill terms with them, he thought it not impossible that he might, by conveying my sentiments to them, and theirs to me, be the means of bringing on a good understanding, without committing either them or me, if his negotiations should not succeed; and that I might rely on his keeping perfectly secret everything I should wish to remain so."

Franklin was much taken with the manner and conversation of Lord Howe, and quite charmed with Mrs. Howe. "I had never," he says, "conceived a higher opinion of the discretion and excellent understanding of any woman on so short an acquaintance." He told Lord Howe his manner was such as had already engaged his confidence; that he requested his Lordship would give him credit for a sincere desire of healing the breach between the two countries, and that he would do everything in his small power to accomplish it; but that he apprehended, from the King's speech, and from the measures talked of, as well as those already determined on, no intention or disposition of the kind existed in the present ministry, and, therefore, no accommodation could be ex-

pected till we saw a change. He said that the *personal injuries* his Lordship had spoken of, in comparison of those done to his country, were not worth mentioning; that besides, it was a fixed rule with him not to mix his private affairs with those of the public. This interview ended by Lord Howe obtaining a promise from Franklin that he would draw up, in writing, some propositions on which he thought a good understanding might be obtained and established, which they agreed to discuss at a meeting at the same place a few days afterwards.

Franklin sent in his propositions through Mrs. Howe; they were of such a nature that it was not likely government would pay the least attention to them; as for instance, repealing all the laws, or parts of laws, requested to be repealed in the petition of the Congress to the King; that orders should be given to withdraw the fleet from Boston, and remove all the troops to Quebec or the Floridas, that the colonies might be left at liberty in their future speculations, &c. Lord Howe told Franklin he would transmit them to ministers, but expressed his apprehensions that such propositions were not likely to produce any good effect; he, however, brought about a meeting between Lord Hyde and Franklin which was equally unsatisfactory. Lord Howe, therefore, saw him for the last time a little before his departure for America, apologized for the trouble he had occasioned him, but hoped, if he should chance to be sent

to America, on the important business of attempting an arrangement, he might still expect his assistance. Franklin assured him of his readiness at all times of co-operating with him in so good a work, "and so," says he, "taking my leave and receiving his good wishes, ended the negotiation with Lord Howe."

Lord Howe having hoisted his flag in the Eagle of 64 guns, sailed from Spithead with a squadron of ships of war, and a fleet of transports, for North America in the early part of 1776, and was followed in May by Commodore Hotham, with another squadron and more transports for the same destination. Howe proceeded in the first instance to Halifax, in the hope of meeting his brother there, but Sir William having left that place, he departed for Staten Island, near New York, where he arrived on the 4th of July. Here he was shortly after joined by the squadron under Commodore Sir Peter Parker, in which was General Clinton who arrived with forces from South Carolina. Sir Peter's squadron consisted of the Bristol of 50 guns, bearing his broad pendant; the Experiment 50; the Active, Solebay, Actæon, and Syren frigates of 28 guns each, four small vessels, and the Thunder bomb. The commodore on the 28th of June had made a gallant attack on Sullivan's Island, strongly fortified with a powerful work which it was necessary to get possession of. This determined and brilliant affair is thus graphically and truly described by Burke.

"Whilst the continued thunder from the ships seemed sufficient to shake the firmness of the bravest enemy, and daunt the courage of the most veteran soldier, the return made by the fort could not fail of calling for the respect, as well as of highly incommoding the brave seamen of Britain. In the midst of that dreadful roar of artillery, they stuck with the greatest constancy and firmness to their guns; fired deliberately and slowly, and took a cool and effective aim. The ships suffered accordingly; they were torn almost to pieces, and the slaughter was dreadful. Never did British valour shine more conspicuous, nor never did our marine, in an engagement of the same nature with any foreign enemy, experience as rude an encounter. The springs of the Bristol's cable being cut by the shot, she lay for some time exposed in such a manner to the enemy's fire, as to be most dreadfully raked. The brave Captain Morris, after receiving a number of wounds, which would have sufficiently justified a gallant man in retiring from his station, still with a noble obstinacy disdained to quit his duty, until his arm being at length shot off, he was carried away in a condition which did not afford a possibility of recovery. It is said that the quarter-deck of the Bristol was at one time cleared of every person but the commodore, who stood alone, a spectacle of intrepidity and firmness, which have seldom been equalled, never exceeded. The others on that deck were either killed, or carried

down to have their wounds dressed. Nor did Captain Scott of the Experiment miss his share of the danger or glory, who, besides the loss of an arm, received so many other wounds, that his life was at first despaired of."

The Bristol had 111 and the Experiment 79 men killed and wounded, and the ships were so much damaged that the enemy was sanguine they would never succeed in getting over the bar. The Actæon grounded in the mud, and the tide falling, was set fire to by our own people. Night coming on, and the tide fast ebbing out, Sir Peter Parker thought it prudent to withdraw his shattered vessels from the scene of action, in which, by some unfortunate accident, he had received no support from the army, as had been arranged.

Such was the sort of reinforcement sent to Lord Howe at Staten Island, very inferior to that he had been led to expect. Before, however, he put his forces in motion to intimidate, rather than at once commit any direct act of hostility against, the rebellious colonists, his first act was to send ashore, by a flag, circulars to as many of the late governors of provinces as were in the neighbourhood, acquainting them with his powers, both civil and military, and enclosing a declaration, granting general or particular pardons to all such as, in the confusion of the times, might have deviated from their just allegiance; and who were willing, by a speedy return to their duty,

to reap the benefits of the royal favour. These papers were immediately forwarded by General Washington to the Congress, and the Congress as speedily published them in all their gazettes, for the purpose, as was stated, "that the good people of these United States might know of what *nature* were the concessions, and what the *terms*, with the expectation of which the insidious Court of Great Britain has endeavoured to amuse and disarm them." In fact, the declaration of himself, and his brother Sir William, came too late; not that a few months, sooner or later, would have made much difference, for the Congress had, on the 4th July, issued a declaration, "that the United Colonies of America are, and of right ought to be, *Free and Independent States*, and that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown."

Lord Howe, however, unwilling to resort to extremities, so long as the least hope remained of conciliating the colonists, next attempted to open a communication with General Washington, and sent some of his officers with a flag and a letter addressed to "George Washington, Esq.," which he refused to receive, as not being addressed with the title, and in the form, due to the public rank and capacity which he held under the United States. On the 20th of the same month, Adjutant-General Paterson was sent to New York by General Sir William Howe, with a letter also addressed to "George Washington, Esq., &c. &c." Washington received him with

great courtesy, and dispensed with the usual ceremony of blindfolding in passing through the fortifications, but he declined to receive the letter. The adjutant, on his part, trusted there might be no difficulty owing to any informality in the address, assuring him there was no intention of derogating from his rank. The General replied, "that a letter directed to any person in a public character should have some description or designation of it, otherwise it would appear to be a mere private letter; that it was true the *et ceteras* implied *everything;* but they also implied *anything;* and that he should absolutely decline any letter directed to him, as a private person, when it related to his public station." Some conference took place about the treatment of prisoners, but nothing satisfactory could be obtained from General Washington.

Nothing now remained for the two brothers but to act decisively in their military capacities; and the first blow to be struck was to drive out the Americans from Long Island and take possession of it. General Sullivan was then sent upon parole, with a message from Lord Howe to the Congress, to state, that although he could not treat with that assembly as such, he was desirous of conferring with some of its members as private gentlemen only; that he was the more desirous of having some compact settled at this time, before any decisive blow should be struck, that neither party might say they were compelled to

enter into the agreement. The Congress said they could not send any of their members to confer with the Noble Lord in their private characters; but that, ever desirous of establishing peace on reasonable terms, they would send a committee of their body to ascertain if Lord Howe had any and what authority to treat with persons authorized by Congress. Dr. Franklin, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Rutledge waited accordingly on Lord Howe in Staten Island; but as these gentlemen found that the two Commissioners had no other authority than that conveyed by Act of Parliament, namely, that of granting pardons on submission, the conference soon ended, and the committee returned to make their report to Congress. No benefit, indeed, could be expected to the mother country from a committee composed of men whose principles were violent in the extreme, and who were known to entertain a bitter hatred to the mother country. His lordship even condescended to inform them, that he was ready to discuss the means of reconciling the differences between Great Britain and America, with any gentleman of influence and importance; but they declined to act in any other character than that with which Congress had invested them; and it ended by Lord Howe assuring them that, to put an end to their grievances, any Act of Parliament that was obnoxious to the colonists should undergo a revisal, and every just cause of complaint be removed, if the colonists would only declare their

willingness to submit to the authority of the British government. This they declared to be impossible; and Lord Howe, finding that all chance of an accommodation was at an end, broke up the conference. From this time to the close of the year our united forces had succeeded in every object; Rhode Island, New York, and both the Jerseys were in possession of the King's troops. And thus having brought matters as briefly as possible to this stage of the unhappy contest, it is not intended to enter into any detail of the succeeding military operations, the object of this Memoir being solely that of illustrating the life and character of that great and good man, Admiral Lord Howe.

Mindful of the friendly intercourse which had subsisted between his lordship and Dr. Franklin in London, he had previously addressed a letter, of which the following is a copy, to the latter, dated Eagle, 20th June 1776, but not despatched till the 12th July, the vessel being detained by calms and contrary winds.

"I cannot, my worthy friend, permit the letters and parcels which I have sent you, in the state I received them, to be landed, without adding a word upon the subject of the injurious extremities in which our unhappy disputes have engaged us.

"You will learn the nature of my mission from the official despatches, which I have recommended to be forwarded by the same conveyance. Retaining all

the earnestness I ever expressed, to see our differences accommodated, I shall conceive, if I meet with the disposition in the colonies which I was once taught to expect, the most flattering hopes of proving serviceable in the objects of the King's paternal solicitude, by promoting the establishment of lasting peace and union with the colonies. But if the deep-rooted prejudices of America, and the necessity of preventing her trade from passing into foreign channels, must keep us still a divided people, I shall, from every private as well as public motive, most heartily lament that it is not the moment wherein those great objects of my ambition are to be attained; and that I am to be longer deprived of an opportunity to assure you personally of the regard with which I am your sincere and faithful," &c. &c.

This letter gave to Benjamin Franklin the opportunity of dilating on the alleged wrongs, the wanton barbarities and cruelties inflicted by the mother country on the colonies; predicting that her pride and deficient wisdom, her fondness for conquest as a warlike nation; her lust of dominion, as an ambitious one; and her thirst for a gainful monopoly, as a commercial one,—must prove as pernicious to her in the end, as the Croisades formerly were to most of the nations in Europe. After a long tirade of this kind, he proceeds in a milder strain. "Long did I endeavour, with unfeigned and unwearied zeal, to preserve from breaking that fine and noble China vase,

the British empire; for I know that, being once broken, the separate parts could not retain even their shares of the strength and value that existed in the whole; and that a perfect re-union of those parts could scarce ever be hoped for. Your lordship may possibly remember the tears of joy that wet my cheek when, at your good sister's in London, you once gave me expectations that a reconciliation might soon take place. I had the misfortune to find these expectations disappointed, and to be treated as the cause of the mischief I was labouring to prevent. My consolation under that groundless and malevolent treatment was, that I retained the friendship of many wise and good men in that country, and among the rest, some share in the regard of Lord Howe. I know your great motive in coming hither was the hope of being instrumental in a reconciliation; and believe that, when you find that to be impossible, on any terms given you to propose, you will relinquish so odious a command, and return to a more honourable private station."* From this reply, and the tone taken at the conference above mentioned, Lord Howe had nothing left but to make use of the means at his disposal, and to endeavour, in conjunction with the army, to bring the refractory colonists to a sense of their duty. He had carried forbearance to its utmost limit.

In the early part of 1777 an unfortunate accident happened at Rhode Island, in the squadron of Sir

Peter Parker, which gave Lord Howe a considerable degree of concern, as it compelled him to take a step which, indispensably necessary as it was, created a disagreeable feeling among the officers of the detached squadron where it occurred, arising entirely out of the erroneous notions they entertained on the subject. In firing a salute on the Queen's birth-day from the Diamond frigate, five men were unfortunately killed, and two wounded, on board the Grand Duke of Russia transport, lying very near the Diamond. In consequence of this a court-martial was held on the first-lieutenant, J. T. Duckworth, the gunner, gunner's mates, and gunner's crew, for neglect of duty; but as it appeared on the trial that one shot had been drawn from the guns that were fired, and that none of the party accused knew they had been double-shotted, the court acquitted them of any neglect of duty. This sentence not appearing satisfactory to Lord Howe, then at New York, he sent an order to Sir Peter Parker to reassemble the court and to try the above-mentioned persons "as principals or accessories in the death of the five seamen late belonging to the Grand Duke of Russia transport." The reasons assigned by his lordship for this fresh trial were, that Fielding, the captain of the ship, who applied first for the court-martial, ought not to have sat; that the names of none of the accused were mentioned in the charge; and that mere neglect of duty did not specify the

charge fully, nor describe the offence correctly. The seven captains who had formed the first court, on being re-assembled, and the order read, expressed their surprise at this proceeding, and wrote to Sir Peter Parker to say, that as the parties accused had once been acquitted, it was their opinion that they could not in justice proceed to try them a second time.

On Lord Howe receiving this report he sent a second order, drawn up by himself, to Sir P. Parker, accompanied by a letter to that officer, in which he observes that the motives, which may have influenced the captains to refuse compliance with his first order, are very unsatisfactory; and he therefore authorises and enjoins him, in case of further refusal being persisted in, to cause every captain, so refusing to perform his required duty in that respect, to be forthwith suspended from his command, and the charge of the ship to be vested in the senior lieutenant for the time being, until he, Sir Peter Parker, should receive his further instructions. On this order the court again met, but declined entering upon the examination of further evidence as unnecessary; and having brought before them the sentence of the previous court, and admitted the validity of the plea set up by the accused parties of having already been tried for the offence charged against them; the court decided that, "having been acquitted of any neglect of their duty, they are in consequence thereof acquitted of murder, or any other crime or crimes that have been

alleged against them, relative to the firing of the guns on board his Majesty's ship the Diamond."

This second sentence proves at least that the seven captains were as equally deficient in logic as in law. Because a person is acquitted of the charge of neglect of duty, he is thereby acquitted of murder, or any other crime alleged against him, is a species of plea that would be laughed at in the Old Bailey. Lord Howe was better informed: he knew that the court was illegally composed—that the charges, as exhibited, were such as ought not to have been entertained—that the omission of all the names of the accused vitiated the proceedings—that the acquittal for neglect of duty was no acquittal for the lives that had been sacrificed—and that, under such a sentence, the nameless persons accused were still liable to be brought before another tribunal, and tried for murder or manslaughter.

A case which occurred to Captain Sir Henry Blackwood, when in command of the Warspite, in the year 1812, is one in point. A letter with several depositions enclosed was received by the Admiralty from a gentleman of the name of Dobson, stating that his late friend Captain Edward Brine, master of the Alert schooner, had been killed by a musket-ball from his Majesty's ship the Warspite, and that, from circumstances stated, it would appear to have been an act of wantonness and cruelty, that might give to the fatal result a denomination, which would require

the most serious inquiry in a court of justice. There was no mistaking the meaning of this. The Lords of the Admiralty, therefore, in order to prevent Sir Henry being indicted and tried at the Old Bailey, directed their marshal to apprehend him, the moment the ship should arrive from the Mediterranean; and an order was sent down "to inquire into the circumstances relating to the death of Edward Brine, master of the Alert schooner, who was killed by a musket-ball fired from his Majesty's ship Warspite, and to try the Honourable Henry Blackwood, captain of the said ship, for his conduct on that occasion, *and for the alleged murder of the said Edward Brine.*" The court having heard the evidence produced in support of the charge, and what the prisoner had to offer in his defence, was of opinion "that the conduct and appearance of the Alert schooner, in standing into the Warspite's convoy, and not shortening sail, was such as strongly to justify the suspicion of her being an enemy, and that the measures taken by the Honourable Captain Blackwood were indispensable, in order to protect his convoy; and that no blame is imputable to Captain the Honourable Henry Blackwood, as the cause of the alleged murder of Edward Brine; the court, therefore, fully acquit the Honourable Edward Blackwood." This gallant officer, naturally enough, was horrified, and excessively indignant, at the idea of being tried on a charge of murder; but was easily made sensible that

it was done solely for his protection. The captains at Rhode Island were as little disposed to think themselves well treated by Lord Howe, in compelling them to sit a third time for the trial of persons already acquitted, and still less at the threat which accompanied the last order. His lordship, however, took an early opportunity, on his arrival from New York, of fully explaining his views of the case.

However well disposed Lord Howe might be to procrastinate, in order to give time for consideration to the Americans, slender as the hope was for any terms of conciliation after signing the Act of Independence; after his correspondence with Franklin, and his conference with this gentleman and others, both he and his brother had made up their minds to take the earliest opportunity of resigning their respective commands: more especially, as they considered their pacific character superseded by the arrival of a fresh batch of commissioners, with the Earl of Carlisle at their head, in which commission the names of the admiral and the general were included. They resolved, however, not to act under Lord Carlisle, who, with his new commissioners, did nothing but issue an exasperating manifesto, the only effect of which was to procure a challenge from the Marquis de la Fayette for Lord Carlisle, who of course did not gratify him with a meeting.

Lady Howe indeed had written to Lord North on the 18th of February 1778, as follows:—"As

I understand a commission is intended to be sent out to treat with the Americans, which must supersede that commission which Lord Howe and General Howe have been honoured with; and as I am convinced his Majesty cannot wish Lord Howe to receive any mortification; I beg leave to submit it to your Lordship's consideration, whether it may not be proper to ask his Majesty's leave for him to quit his naval command, in case he should wish to do so."

This letter was transmitted by Lord Sandwich to the admiral, giving him, very reluctantly, leave to come home; adding, "I am very certain that his Majesty wishes you should not think it necessary to leave the command; and for myself, I can with the utmost truth assure you, that I shall consider it as a very great additional misfortune, if we are to lose the advantage of your able assistance in the present critical state of our affairs (both civil and military) on your side of the Atlantic."

The unexpected arrival of a fresh enemy in the early part of July retarded, but did not alter, his determination to return home. The French, with their accustomed bad faith, their rooted hatred of England, and their readiness, on every occasion, to take a treacherous and undue advantage, by uniting their forces to those of any power with which she was engaged in hostilities, had become the confederates of the revolted colonies. They knew, as all the

world did, the small naval force we had in America; but it would appear that the ministers knew nothing of the fleet which was despatched under the orders of Count d'Estaing. Lord Sandwich had said to Lord Howe, in March, "I do not think at present there is any probability that France will declare openly for the rebels." He was left, therefore, with a force utterly unequal to compete with that of D'Estaing, who, in the first instance, sailed into the Delaware, in the hope of surprising the British squadron in that river; but he found that Philadelphia was in our possession, and that the fleet had proceeded to the northward. On the 11th of July he appeared before Sandy Hook, a low point, which, jutting from the main land, forms behind it a good harbour for shipping of the largest class; and here the squadron of Lord Howe was lying, to keep open the communication with, and forward supplies to, the army in New York, then in our possession.

The fleet of D'Estaing consisted of twelve sail of the line and three or four frigates; among them were several of the largest class of ships then in use; one of 90 guns, one of 80, and six of 74 guns each; the other four not stated, but suppose them of 60 guns each; manned with at least 10,000 men. The British fleet, under Lord Howe, consisted of six 64 gun ships, three of 50, and two of 40 guns, with a few small frigates and sloops. His ships too were mostly old, of a very bad construction, many of

them crippled, all of them out of repair, and the crews had become sickly, besides being short in their complements. These were fearful odds—854 guns to 614; and the weight of metal, and the size of the ships were greater in proportion than the numbers of the guns. The deficiency in point of men was however amply made good. Never, indeed, did the spirit of British seamen shine forth with greater lustre than on this occasion. A thousand volunteers were immediately despatched from the transports to serve in the fleet; others were daily joining it; masters and mates of merchantmen offered their services. Every disposition was made by Lord Howe for the defence of the fleet, and the multitude of shipping, in the event of the enemy venturing to pass the bar. For eleven days the French fleet remained at anchor outside the Hook; the British seamen became impatient to have a brush with them, unequal as the two forces were. But the commander-in-chief had too heavy a responsibility to risk a combat with an enemy so very superior. A defeat would not only have been fatal to the whole naval force, the transports and mercantile shipping, but the salvation of the army depended on the safety and efficiency of the fleet.

On the 22nd of July D'Estaing's fleet weighed anchor, just at the time of high water, when any ship of the largest size might pass the bar without difficulty, and all hands in Howe's fleet were in joy-

ful expectation they intended to do so. D'Estaing, however, did not think it expedient to engage the British fleet, but shaped his course to the northward. The departure of this squadron, at the moment it took place, was most fortunate, as within a few days after it had left the anchorage, the dispersed squadron, under Vice-Admiral Byron, which had been despatched from England in search of D'Estaing, arrived on different parts of the coast, four of them off Sandy Hook, which must inevitably have fallen into the enemy's hands. These ships appeared originally to have been sent out in haste, badly manned, and ill equipped. They had met with unusual bad weather, and arrived at such different ports as they could fetch, most of them sickly, some dismasted, and others much damaged. The Cornwall, of 74 guns, was the only one in good condition, at least better than any of the others that arrived off Sandy Hook.

It will easily be imagined with what satisfaction Lord Howe received this increase of force to his squadron, crippled as the ships were; and having obtained information that the enemy had appeared off Rhode Island, that he had determined to enter the harbour, and that, to prevent the four frigates lying there from falling into his hands, their commanders and crews had resolved to burn them—the commander-in-chief at once determined to put to sea, with the intention of giving battle to the French admiral. The force he took with him, and with which he appeared

off Rhode Island, consisted of one ship of 74 guns, one of 70, six of 64, five of 50, and two of 44, besides four frigates and some smaller vessels. The number of guns of the ships of the line, as thirteen of them were then considered to be, was 866 opposed to 854, being 12 in his favour; but when the difference in the weight of metal is taken into consideration, the odds against him were very great. From the delay that was indispensable in putting to rights the damaged ships which had just joined him, and owing to the adverse winds on the passage, he was unable to reach Rhode Island until the 9th of August, the day after the French fleet had entered the harbour. The relative positions of the two squadrons were now just the reverse of those they held at Sandy Hook; but they did not long continue to be so; for a breeze springing up from the north-east enabled D'Estaing to leave the harbour with his whole fleet, with the apparent intention of bringing Lord Howe to an engagement. His Lordship, however, justly considering the weather-gauge too great an advantage to be given to an enemy having a vastly superior force, manœuvred with all the skill and judgment which he so eminently possessed, in order to get to windward; but D'Estaing, naturally unwilling to yield such an advantage, notwithstanding his superiority, declined offering battle, which he could at any moment have done to his opponent, and persevered throughout the whole of the 11th in keeping his windward position.

The wind continued the same on the following

day, and Lord Howe, seeing that nothing was likely to be done but a repetition of the struggle for the weather-gauge, determined to offer battle, and, if accepted, to engage the enemy to leeward. For this purpose he brought up his three frigates, each towing a fire-ship, into the line. Whether the French admiral meant to accept the challenge or not was left undecided, for a strong gale of wind springing up, and shortly increasing to a violent storm, not only put an end to all manœuvring, and separated the fleets from each other, but dispersed them both entirely, and occasioned so much damage, as to make any attempt to renew their hostile positions utterly impracticable. D'Estaing's squadron appeared to have suffered most. His flag-ship, the Languedoc, of 90 guns, was totally dismasted, and in this condition was fallen in with two days afterwards in the evening, by Captain Dawson of the Renown of 50 guns, who attacked her with such skill and vigour that, if daylight had continued, there could be little doubt of the event, especially as before he left her he had closed upon her, poured in some heavy broadsides, and shot away her rudder. He lay-to for the night, making sure of taking possession of her as soon as daylight should appear, when, to his great mortification, he perceived six French ships of war bearing down upon him, which compelled him to abandon what he might fairly consider an easy and certain prize.

It is remarkable enough that, on the same evening,

Commodore Hotham, of the Preston of 50 guns, fell in with the Tonnant, an 80-gun ship, which had lost all her masts except the mainmast. He attacked her with the same spirit as Captain Dawson had engaged the Languedoc; and the same circumstance of being obliged to lay by for the night, in order to complete his conquest in the morning occurred—that of having the ill luck of seeing the French fleet at daylight, which deprived him of a trophy no less certain than that which was snatched away from Captain Dawson.

The dispersion of the fleet brought together two other ships of the contending parties, between which a most gallant and brilliant action was fought on very unequal terms. Neither of them had suffered in the late gale. The Isis of 50 guns, commanded by Captain Raynor, was chased by a French 74, carrying a flag, supposed to be the Zelé, which, being the better sailer, soon came up with and commenced firing upon the Isis. This brought on a desperate engagement, which must speedily have terminated in the capture or destruction of the Isis, had not the consummate skill of the commander, and the activity of her brave crew, made up for the great inferiority of her force. The action continued within pistol-shot for an hour and a half, when the Frenchman bore up and made off before the wind. The Isis had suffered so much in her masts and rigging as to be utterly unable to follow her. The modest manner in which

Captain Raynor described this transaction, in about half a dozen lines, drew from Lord Howe, in his official report to the Admiralty, the following remark:—"It is requisite I should supply the deficiency of his recital, by observing to their Lordships that the superiority acquired over the enemy in the action appears to be not less the effect of Captain Raynor's very skilful management of his ship, than of his distinguished resolution, and the bravery of his men and officers."

The following is an extract from a private letter (MS.) to a friend, giving an account of this brilliant action:—"The weather had been foggy, and at noon cleared up a little, when a sail was seen in the north-east; we chased, soon perceived she chased also; but a little wind, only giving two or three knots. At three discovered he was no friend, and at a quarter past, told fifteen ports aloft and fourteen below—alarming enough. He showed his colours and fired a gun to leeward, which we not answering to his satisfaction, he up lower-deck ports, out guns, and gave us the whole; but ill-served and ill-directed. The guns appeared to me to be too much overcharged. As soon as he passed our quarter he threw in stays: as soon as he put about we put our helm a starboard, and as soon as the larboard guns came to bear on him, we told them into his bows, loaded with double round shot, and which had an amazing effect. This touch of ours stopped their huzzaing, which they did

a good deal before, and brought us close together: he then gave us his fire, which annoyed us very little. We lay then near an hour close along-side within half-musket shot, and, to my great satisfaction and astonishment, I found we out-fired him considerably. He then got upon our bow, and made the forecastle so hot that there was no standing upon it." After detailing the manœuvres of the two ships, till the enemy made sail and went off before the wind, he says, "we were engaged about an hour and a half. It is scarcely credible, my dear friend, a little 50-gun ship should be so closely engaged so long as that with a 74, who had, when she left France, 900 men, and we only to lose one man and fifteen wounded, two of which have since died of their wounds. The captain of the Cæsar, as subsequent reports say, (Captain Bougainville,) lost his arm and an eye, and is since dead of his wounds, and that 70 were killed, and 150 wounded."

After stating the shattered condition of his rigging and sails, he says, "I have been more particular with regard to our action than to any other person; not that I wish you to make it public, but on the contrary, far otherwise; but as I know your attachment to your friends, my dear Redward, is great, I have the more pleasure in giving you every kind of satisfaction."

D'Estaing did not, as might have been expected, return to Rhode Island, but collected his scattered

ships in Boston harbour. This gave great offence to his allies, who certainly had some cause to complain of his conduct, they having, under the assurance of the most effective naval co-operation, with great difficulty and expense, brought down a large army, which was now compelled to abandon possession of the island, and to leave the people, who had lent their assistance to the French, exposed to the mercy of an invading enemy. The troops in fact began to desert in great numbers, and finding that Sir William Clinton was on his march from New York, they were not obstructed, but suffered to return, without molestation, to the continent.

Lord Howe, having taken for granted that, as D'Estaing came out from Rhode Island under pretence of offering him battle, he would return to that place, directed his fleet to make the best of their way to Boston as the point of rendezvous, but had the mortification to find that D'Estaing had got thither before him; and this disappointment was not diminished on ascertaining that the anchorage was so effectually protected by batteries and defensive works, on every point and island in the harbour, as to render any successful attack on the French squadron utterly impracticable; and as it appeared to him, from the shattered state of the enemy's ships, and the position they had taken up for repairing them, that D'Estaing had no further intention of engaging in active hostilities, Lord Howe proceeded to

New York and, having received his leave of absence, and finding his health giving way, in consequence of the great fatigue and anxiety he had undergone, and that the object for which he was sent to America was so utterly hopeless of attainment, he resigned the command of the squadron there assembled to Rear-Admiral Gambier, and proceeding from thence to Rhode Island to communicate with Vice-Admiral Byron, he gave up the command of the American station to that officer as commander-in-chief; having first made all the necessary dispositions and arrangements for the protection of the several parts of the coast then in our possession.

By this time a respectable fleet had been brought together for the service of the American station, partly from England, partly from the West Indies, and also from Halifax, when there was no longer an enemy to contend with on the sea. It consisted of one ship of 90 guns, eight of 74, seven of 64, five of 50, and three of 44, making twenty-four sail of the line as they were then reckoned; thirty-one frigates from 36 to 20 guns, twelve sloops, and twenty armed vessels, bombs, &c., amounting to sixty-seven; composing in the whole an armament of ninety-one sail of ships: to which may be added about 20,000 tons of transport shipping, for victualling and conveying the army. For all this Lord Howe was but little indebted to the Admiralty, from

whom indeed he conceived he had from the first experienced great neglect. On receiving information from that board, when on the eve of returning, of his having been appointed vice-admiral of the red squadron, he says in reply, " though impressed with a just sense of the king's most gracious patronage on that occasion, I cannot cease to lament the public testimonies of their lordships' disesteem which I have experienced by a repeated separation from the class of flag officers, with whom I was first advanced to that rank."

The General, Sir William Howe, had, some time previous to this, given up the command of the army to Sir Henry Clinton, disgusted with the conduct of the Secretary for the American Department, Lord George Germain. Previous to his departure, and just when he was resigning his command, the officers at Philadelphia gave him a grand fête, to which they gave the name of Mischianza. This entertainment is described as not only to have far exceeded any thing that had ever been seen in America, but as rivalling the magnificent exhibitions of that vain-glorious monarch, Louis XIV. of France. All the colours of the army were placed in a grand avenue, three hundred feet in length, lined with the King's troops, between two triumphal arches, for the two brothers, the Admiral and General, to march along in pompous procession, followed by a numerous train of attendants, with seven silken knights of the *Blended Rose,*

and seven more of the *Burning Mountain*, and fourteen damsels dressed in the Turkish fashion, each knight bearing an appropriate motto to the damsel of his choice. From this avenue they marched into an open area, one hundred and fifty yards square, lined also with the King's troops, for the exhibition of a tilt and tournament, or mock fight of old chivalry, in honour of those two heroes. On the top of each triumphal arch was a figure of Fame, bespangled with stars, blowing from her trumpet, in letters of light, "*Tes lauriers sont Immortels.*" Lord Cathcart acted the character of Chief of the Knights.

This silly exhibition, got up by the army, did not escape the most bitter satire both in America and at home. It was abused and happily ridiculed by that vagabond Paine. "He bounces off with his bombs and burning hearts, set upon the pillars of his triumphal arch which, at the proper time of the show, burst out in a shower of squibs and crackers, and other fire works, to the delectable amazement of Miss Craig, Miss Chew, Miss Redman, and all the other Misses, dressed out as the fair damsels of the Blended Rose, and of the Burning Mountain, for this farce of knight errantry."

Sir William Howe could not do less than accept this testimony of regard, foolish as it might be, from his brother officers, by whom he was much beloved. On the day of his departure, the 24th of May, a spectator writes to his friend: "I am just returned from

conducting our beloved General to the water side, and have seen him receive a more flattering testimony of the love and attachment of his army, than all the pomp and splendour of the Mischianza could convey to him. I have seen the most gallant of our officers, and those whom I least suspected of giving such instances of their affection, shed tears while they bade him farewell. The gallant and affectionate general of the Hessians, Knyphausen, was so moved, that he could not finish a compliment he began to pay him in his own name, and that of the officers who attended him. Sir Henry Clinton accompanied him to the wharf, where Lord Howe received him into his barge, and they are both gone down to Billingsport. On my return I saw nothing but dejected countenances*."

On the 26th of September 1778, Lord Howe left Rhode Island in the Eagle, and arrived at St. Helens on the 25th of October, having narrowly escaped an attack from a squadron of French ships of the line, near the chops of the Channel. On the 30th of that month he was ordered to strike his flag and come on shore.

It has been observed that, in consequence of what happened regarding the court-martial held on the first lieutenant and others of the Diamond, soon after Howe arrived on the coast, an unpleasant feeling towards his Lordship remained on the minds of

* Annual Register, Vol. XXI.

some of the captains who composed the Court, but there is no reason to doubt that it soon subsided, when they came to think soberly on the subject, and were satisfied that the object of the Commander-in-Chief could be no other than to screen them against future inconvenience, and that nothing like anger or caprice had any share in the transaction, from both of which no human being was more exempt than Lord Howe. That his Lordship was universally esteemed by the officers under his command in North America, as the first man in his profession, appears from the testimony of the gallant Captain Raynor of the Isis. In a postscript of the letter already quoted this officer says, "We are all just going to take leave of the first man in his profession; how he may be received I know not; but he is, in my opinion, the first sea officer in the world, and so says every person here."

Horace Walpole has said that Howe never made a friendship but at the mouth of a cannon. Here however he made one on service, which was as lasting as it was sudden. His predecessor, Admiral Shuldam, had given an acting order to Lieutenant Curtis, to command the Senegal sloop, and sent him to destroy some American privateers. He found it necessary to deviate from his instructions. On returning, Lord Howe had succeeded to the command. He was directed to send him his orders, was told he had been guilty of disobeying them, and was desired

to state his reasons for so doing. Satisfied with his explanation, Lord Howe said, " Sir, you have acted very properly, and I have great pleasure in confirming your appointment to the Senegal." A second time Curtis disobeyed an order he had received from Lord Howe. Having explained his conduct to his Lordship, he received for answer: " Your conduct, with regard to the despatches, testified so correct a judgment in every part, that, if my concurrence in opinion with you on the propriety of it will convey all the satisfaction you do me the favour to intimate, you are free to indulge yourself in the enjoyment of that consciousness to the fullest extent."

This quaint approval, for so it seems to have been intended, if it was not a rare instance of verbiage on the part of his Lordship, would almost justify the remark which has been made of his want of clearness, whether in speech or writing, which, as generally applied, is very far from being the case. There is however an anecdote, told by Captain Locker (late lieutenant-governor of Greenwich Hospital), which would tend rather to corroborate the justness of the remark. Three or four frigates having been ordered on a particular service, the captains were summoned by Lord Howe into his cabin, to have their written instructions more fully explained to them. After occupying some time in this explanation, they retired, and upon meeting together, after leaving the Admiral, as they could not fully comprehend what had been said,

they resolved on demanding a further intimation of his views. They agreed to toss up who should solicit this second interview. The one to whose lot it fell, after an hour's further conference, returned to his colleagues, and on their seeking the needful explanation which they looked for, he told them he understood the Admiral's orders less clearly than at the first interview. This accords with an observation, communicated by Admiral Sir Robert Stopford, who knew him well:—"Lord Howe possessed a very peculiar manner of explaining himself, both in correspondence and conversation, but his mind was always clear, prompt, and willing to communicate with every person who consulted him, and who could get rid of the apparent coldness of his manner." It will be seen in the sequel how far the remark applies, as to his correspondence.

In a subsequent letter to Curtis, he says, "I beg I may release you from any uneasiness you may feel upon a fancied impropriety in the communication of your ideas at any time, with respect to the benefit of the King's service. Exclusive of the laudable principle which induces you to take notice of such particulars, as your local knowledge will more especially enable you to remark, I shall always reckon it a personal obligation to be furnished with any opinions which may be productive of that benefit."

Thus, on points of service in America, commenced a friendship, which endured, without intermission,

for the space of twenty-three years—to the last hour, it may almost be said, of the noble Earl's life—and, it may be added, to the surviving part of the family after his death; and it may here be mentioned, that to this friendship is owing the preservation of the almost only written documents that remain of this gallant officer's own composition, consisting of a series of letters on various subjects, amounting to not less than four hundred. Their dates commence in the year 1776, and are carried on to 1799, the last written with his own hand, as every one of them are, sixteen days before his death. In further proof of the estimation in which he held his new acquaintance, after obtaining for him the rank of captain, he requested and got permission from home to take him as his second captain in the Eagle, and when paid off, procured for him an appointment to the Brilliant. He also, on becoming first Lord of the Admiralty, appointed him to the Ganges; and finally, took him as Captain of the Fleet in the Queen Charlotte, when in command of the Channel fleet; a situation he held at the memorable battle of the 1st of June 1794.

CHAPTER V.

RELIEF OF GIBRALTAR.

Debates in Parliament on American affairs—The part taken by Lord Howe—Declines serving under the then administration—Change of ministers—Appointed by Lord Keppel to the command of the Channel fleet—Sent first to the North Sea; then off Ushant—State of preparations for the siege of Gibraltar—The attack of, described by an Italian officer—Total destruction of the floating batteries—No intelligence of this had reached England when Lord Howe was ordered to proceed for the relief of the garrison—Loss of the Royal George, one of his squadron—Of Admiral Kempenfelt, and his signals—Attention of Lord Howe to naval tactics and evolutions—Anecdote, relating to his proposal for a night action—Arrival at, and passage through, the Strait of Gibraltar—Spanish fleet at anchor in the Bay—Convoy of transports and store-ships driven through the Strait—Covered by the fleet—Tremendous gale of wind—Loss of Spanish ships—Spanish fleet passes the Strait—Howe succeeds in relieving the garrison—Repasses the Strait, and offers battle off Cape Spartel—The combined fleets forty-four sail of the line, to thirty-four English—Partial action, which terminates in the combined fleet making for Cadiz—General Elliot's opinion of Lord Howe, and praise of Captain Curtis—Courteous conduct of the Duc de Crillon and the French princes towards General Elliot—Howe, having made two detachments of fourteen sail of the line, returns with the rest of his fleet to St. Helens.

Lord Howe and his brother had not much reason to be satisfied with the reception they met with from ministers on their return to England. Sir William said in Parliament that imputations had been cast upon both, for not terminating the American war

last campaign; and he made a motion for papers to be laid before the house. Lord Howe said the conduct of himself and his brother had been arraigned in pamphlets and newspapers, written in many instances by persons in high credit and confidence with ministers; by members of that house, in that house, in the face of the nation; by some of great esteem and respect in their public characters, and known to have been countenanced by the administration; they therefore both courted the most searching inquiry into their conduct; for himself he wished to retire from all public men and public measures; but he wished at the same time to do it with honour. The King had been graciously pleased to honour his brother and himself with his royal approbation, but the ministry had withheld it from them. He said that he had been deceived into his command; that he was deceived while he retained it; that, tired and disgusted, he desired permission to resign it; that he would have returned as soon as he obtained leave, but he could not think of doing so, while a superior enemy remained in the American seas; that as soon as Mr. Byron's arrival removed that impediment, by giving a decided superiority to the British arms, he gladly embraced the first opportunity of returning to Europe; and that a thorough recollection of what he suffered, induced him to decline any risk of ever returning to a situation, which might terminate in equal ill-treatment, mortification, and disgust. Such were

his motives for resigning the command, and such for declining any future service, so long as the present ministers remained in office.

Lord Howe had hitherto taken little share in the debates during the three sessions he had sat in parliament; in fact, he had most of the time been employed on active service. The imputed bad conduct of the administration towards the navy, of which he had practical reason to complain, now brought him forward. He had arrived in England just in time to take a part in the quarrel between Keppel and Palliser; and when Mr. Fox brought forward his motion for the dismissal of Sir Hugh Palliser from the navy, for having preferred a malicious and ill-founded accusation, of a capital nature, against his commander-in-chief, Lord Howe said, he thought the conduct of Sir Hugh had been such as to render it impossible for him to be continued in the navy; but if he was really to be tried by a court-martial, which he greatly preferred to that of striking him off the list, he should not support the motion for the address, much as he deprecated the whole conduct of the ministers as regarded the naval service. His lordship was well aware of the baneful influence of party, and that the only chance of justice being done to an individual accused of a crime, was by submitting his case to a tribunal of brother officers.

In the debate on Dunning's motion respecting courts-martial, Admiral Pigot passed several high

encomiums on the two great officers about to quit the service, the Admirals Howe and Keppel. He recapitulated their various services in very flattering terms. He begged Lord Howe's pardon for speaking favourably of him to his face, as he knew no man liked it less; spoke of his great services at Rhode Island; and concluded with a general testimony, how calculated by every virtue, public and private, he was to conquer and command, by the interest he had in the heart of every British seaman. He trusted the expression, however homely, would not offend his lordship—that was, "Give us Black Dick, and we fear nothing." Lord Howe confessed he little deserved the compliments passed on him by the honourable gentleman, and observed he should deserve the epithet of "Black" indeed, in a very different sense, if he did not feel the most grateful emotions at his heart, on the very favourable opinion his country, his brother officers and seamen entertained of his feeble attempts towards a performance of his duty. He said it would nevertheless not be prudent to trust the little reputation he had earned by forty years' service, his personal honour, and everything else which he held dear, in the hands of men, who had neither the ability to act on their own judgment, nor the integrity and good sense to follow the advice of others, who might know more of the matter. On another occasion, where his character and conduct had been praised, he said that he

disclaimed all praise, and made no public declarations of the motives that induced him to quit his Majesty's service; and he desired no persons would take the liberty of ascribing motives to him for not serving, of which they could only speak from conjecture.

On the 29th February 1780, when a motion of thanks was proposed to be given to Admiral Sir George Brydges Rodney, for the late signal and important services he had rendered to his King and country, Lord Howe said, there could be but one opinion that the admiral merited every mark of distinction and honour which that house could bestow; that he could not, without an uncommon degree of resolution and judgment, have obtained so successful a result as the attack was over the squadron of Langara; and he was rejoiced to find the minister stand up at once, on the confirmation of the news, in the absence of the admiral, and do him justice in the face of a British House of Commons. Such conduct became ministers, and was due to those who were risking their lives and characters, at a distance from home, in the service of their country.

It would not appear that, during the session of 1781, Lord Howe took any active part in the House of Commons, except on questions which regarded the navy, or the naval administration, on which occasions he gave his opinions frankly but briefly—the silent "characteristic of his race" not being favourable to long speeches. His time was principally

spent with his family at Porters, in that domestic retirement which, as appears from many of his letters, he so much coveted. His three daughters were now fast advancing to womanhood, the eldest being twenty years of age, and all of them fit companions for their father, who, on his part, was fond of reading, and was most domestically inclined. He had made a declaration in the Commons, that he never would serve again under the present ministers, and calculated on a long repose in the enjoyment of a rural life. But in March 1782, the American question and the state of the navy were so pressed upon the ministers, that they sent in their resignation.

The new administration was composed of friends of Lord Howe; the Marquis of Rockingham, Lord Shelburne, Mr. Fox, Lord John Cavendish, and Admiral Keppel (now created a Viscount and First Lord of the Admiralty), had all supported him on questions in which he was immediately or indirectly concerned. It was not likely, therefore, that under this change of ministers his Lordship would be suffered to remain unemployed. Accordingly he was immediately called upon to serve, and on the 9th of April received a summons to wait on Lord Keppel. "On this evening," Lord Howe says, "I attended at the Admiralty Office, and received a commission, appointing me to command in chief a squadron to be employed in Channel soundings, or wherever else the

King's service shall require; also a commission, appointing me to the rank of Admiral of the Blue squadron; and further, on the 10th, an order to take the twenty sail of the line therein specified under my command; and on the 20th embarked at Portsmouth, and directed my distinguishing flag to be hoisted in the Victory, then ready for sea." On the 20th of the same month his Majesty was pleased to raise him to the rank of a peer of Great Britain, by the title of Viscount Howe, of Langar, in the county of Nottingham.

Soon after this he received further directions to take under his command Vice-Admiral Barrington and Rear-Admiral Kempenfelt, and to proceed to the Downs, and there to take also Rear-Admiral Sir John Ross and his ships, under his command, the whole to be employed in the North Seas, to watch the motions of the Dutch fleet in the Texel. On this service he remained till the 2nd June, when the weather became so tempestuous that the fleet stood over to the English coast, where he received an intimation that he would speedily be wanted at Spithead, and thereupon he proceeded at once thither. Immediately after his arrival he received orders to put to sea and to cruize off Brest, for the purpose of intercepting, and giving battle to, the combined fleets of France and Spain, which had sailed from Cadiz on the 4th June, and to continue fifteen days on that station.

On the evening of the 28th June he put to sea with twenty-one sail of the line and four frigates, having taken under his orders Vice-Admiral Barrington and Rear-Admiral Kempenfelt. Light winds, calms, and foggy weather, prevented the fleet reaching off Ushant before the 9th July. Lord Howe had received information from various ships spoken with in his progress down Channel, of an enemy's squadron being at sea; but on this day a Portuguese brig gave information that he had passed through the combined fleet the morning before, off Ushant, consisting of thirty-one ships (four of them three-deckers), including frigates; he therefore, as the weather cleared up, threw out the signal *to prepare for battle*, which was repeated to the fleet by the several divisional officers. The weather for the two next days was so bad that the Commander-in-Chief says the fleet could not be kept in any kind of regularity.

Having received advice of the daily expectation of the West India trade, under convoy of Sir Peter Parker with four frigates, and that the rendezvous, in case of separation, was the south-west coast of Ireland, he proceeded to the westward, and soon after break of day discovered the combined fleet of the enemy, increased, as he had reason to believe, and afterwards ascertained, by a junction of the Brest squadron, the whole now consisting of about thirty-six ships of the line, besides frigates. The signal was made for forming in three divisions as soon as the

enemy was first seen; and having sufficiently ascertained their force, the signal was made for coming together on the other tack.

And here an extract from Lord Howe's private journal will show how great the mortification of the Commander-in-chief must have been, on finding that, after all the labour he had bestowed on the important object of completing a code of naval signals, partly from the very unequal sailing of his ships, and partly from the inexperience or inattention of several of their captains, very little confidence was to be placed on the certain execution of any one required evolution. The extract is as follows:—

"The ships were together according to the signal, but, instead of keeping their relative situations, intended and would necessarily have been placed, most of them made sail to take stations *ahead*, which they ought to have done *astern*, of their respective divisional commanders; whereby the weaker and worst sailing ships of the rear-admiral's division became placed in the rear. Finding it impracticable to make any change in their situations, the further movements were directed accordingly." But the ships were as much in fault as their commanders; for his lordship states, that he found it impossible to keep the slower-sailing ships connected and covered from any partial attack, several of them having all their sails set, some even studding-sails, whilst others were too far ahead under their topsails only. Fortunately the enemy's

fleet appeared to be as much divided, so that from seven to twelve sail were seen advanced from the rest, led by a three-decker, coming down under all sails set; but the British fleet having formed a line of battle ahead, the enemy declined to engage in a partial attack. Lord Howe therefore thought proper to get to the westward of the enemy, both for facilitating the safe passage of the Jamaica convoy into the channel, and for gaining the advantage for bringing them to action, should they think fit to follow, which however they declined to do.

The admiral continued cruising between Scilly and Cape Clear, for twenty-three days from first getting sight of the combined fleet; at the end of which, having reason to believe, from several ships of war and other vessels, that the whole of the valuable Jamaica trade had passed up Channel, he bore up for Torbay, where he arrived on the 4th August, and on the 15th the fleet anchored at Spithead. Here he received orders, on the 10th September, again to take under his command the squadron he had left at Torbay, together with Vice-Admiral Millbank, and Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Hughes of the Blue squadron, and to keep them in constant readiness for putting to sea on the shortest notice.

The account of the tremendous preparations, on the part of Spain, for the siege of Gibraltar, had reached England, but the government was not aware of their extent, or that they were such as, from

their nature and magnitude, had never before been attempted by any power in Europe;—the huge floating batteries, so constructed as to be deemed impervious to shot, and so contrived with tubes supplied with streams of water, by means of pumps, as to render them incombustible by red-hot shot, which had previously and successfully been used by the garrison in setting fire to some of the blockading ships and boats—all these preparations had satisfied the Spanish government that these novel machines, the invention and construction of an ingenious Frenchman, could neither be set on fire nor sunk, and that the destruction and capture of the fortress were now inevitable.

All these mighty machines however were doomed to perish by the skill, the perseverance, and the determined and resolute bravery of General Elliot and his little garrison on the rock, ably assisted by a marine brigade of gun-boats under the command of Captain Curtis of the Brilliant.

The British ministers, though not fully aware of the extent of the danger that threatened the garrison, were apprised of the renewed attempt about to be made of reducing it by famine, with the assistance of a combined fleet of France and Spain. Of the exact force of this fleet they were ignorant, and, as it afterwards appeared, underrated its magnitude. The time was fully arrived, however, to hasten the

preparations that had been in progress for some time; and Lord Howe was ordered to proceed with the force above mentioned for the relief of the brave garrison of Gibraltar, the importance of which was considered by the people of England as one of the brightest jewels of the crown. The attack of the floating batteries, which so signally failed, had been hastened by certain advice that the British fleet under the command of Lord Howe was on its way to relieve the fortress; and with the view of preventing this, the Admiral Don Louis de Cordova was despatched with the combined fleet under his command, to support the grand attack on Gibraltar, to prevent its relief, and to engage the British fleet under Lord Howe, should he make his appearance. The re-conquest of this fortress by the French and Spaniards would have given to these powers the entire command of the Mediterranean, and from that moment our influence to the eastward of the Pillars of Hercules would have been annihilated, and the national character and honour of Great Britain have sunk with the loss of the fortress of Gibraltar.

Though the public is in possession of that detailed and highly-interesting narrative of the Siege of Gibraltar by Colonel Drinkwater, and other accounts of that memorable event, it may not be irrelevant to give a brief abstract of what happened previous to the arrival of Lord Howe, from a manuscript of

an Italian officer in the service of Spain, on board the combined fleet*.

"On the morning of September 13th, 1782, the floating batteries got underweigh with a fair wind to proceed to Gibraltar, and at seven o'clock they had arranged themselves for the attack; whilst thus employed, our batteries from the land side redoubled their fire upon the garrison. At nine o'clock the floating batteries had got within gun-shot of the walls, when a tremendous fire was opened upon them by the British garrison, by which however the commanders were not disconcerted, but in a short time placed them in line so as to be able to open their fire together." [They were completely moored, says Drinkwater, in little more than ten minutes.]

"The brunt of their fire was directed against the fortifications on the Old Mole and the south bastion, and we conceived great hopes, from the cool and intrepid manner of beginning the attack, that our success was certain. The floating batteries were so constructed that the shot, which pierced their sides or roofs, would at the same time pass through a tube which should discharge a quantity of water to extinguish the fire which it might create; this hope however proved fallacious. From nine till two they kept up a well-directed fire with very little damage

* This account was among the papers of the late Sir Evan Nepean, and sent by his son to Captain Brenton, R.N., who kindly communicated it to the author, though he had intended to make use of it himself.

on their part; but our hopes of ultimate success became less sanguine when, at two o'clock, the floating battery commanded by the Prince of Nassau (on board of which was also the engineer who had invented the machinery) began to smoke on the side exposed to the garrison, and it was apprehended she had taken fire. The firing however continued till we could perceive the fortifications had sustained some damage; but at seven o'clock all our hopes vanished. The fire from our floating batteries entirely ceased, and rockets were thrown up as signals of distress. In short, the red hot balls from the garrison had by this time taken such good effect, that nothing now was thought of but saving the crews, and the boats of the combined fleet were immediately sent on that service.

"A little after midnight the floating battery, which had been the first to show symptoms of conflagration, burst out into flames, upon which the fire from the rock was increased with terrific vengeance; the light produced from the flames was equal to noon-day, and greatly exposed the boats of the fleet in removing the crews." [The light thrown out on all sides by the flames, Drinkwater says, enabled the artillery to point their guns with the utmost precision, whilst the rock and neighbouring objects were highly illuminated, forming, with the constant flashes of our cannon, a mingled scene of sublimity and terror.]

"During the night one or other of these batteries was discovered to be on fire; they were so close to the

walls that the balls pierced into them full three feet, but being made of solid beds of green timber, the holes closed up after the shot, and for want of air they did not immediately produce the effect. At five A.M., one of them blew up with a very great explosion, and soon after the whole of them, having been abandoned by their crews, were on fire fore and aft, and many of their gallant fellows were indebted to the exertions of the English for their lives. As the English boats were towing one of these batteries into the Mole, not supposing her to be on fire, she also blew up."

It was at this tremendous moment that the national spirit and character of Englishmen for rescuing fellow creatures in distress shone in their true light, and were never displayed with greater lustre. Brigadier Curtis with his little gallant crew in his pinnace were close to this floating battery when she blew up, and were by the explosion involved in one vast cloud of fire and smoke, and masses of burning wood, by which the coxwain was killed, and several of the crew wounded; one of these timbers went through the pinnace's bottom, and she was only saved from sinking by the sailors stuffing their jackets into the hole. All the other gun-boats were equally exposed, in dragging from the wrecks that had already exploded, and from amidst the mutilated carcasses of the dead, the wounded victims that were still alive, and in picking up from logs of wood steaming in the

sea, the miserable wretches not yet deprived of life. "Notwithstanding the efforts of the Marine Brigade," says Colonel Drinkwater, "in relieving the terrified victims from the burning ships, several unfortunate men could not be removed." The scene at this time exhibited was as affecting as that, which, in the act of hostility, had been terrible and tremendous. Men crying from amidst the flames for pity and assistance; others on board those ships where the fire had made little progress, imploring relief with the most expressive gestures and signs of despair; whilst several equally exposed to the dangers of the opposite element, trusted themselves on various parts of the wreck to the chance of paddling to the shore."

Thus ended the last hope which had been entertained of the success of these formidable machines, with their total destruction, and the loss of 400 men, and 150 brass cannon of large calibre. Captain Curtis estimates the expense of these floating batteries alone at 150,000*l*.

The Italian officer goes on to say, "On the same day the garrison received by a ship from England the cheering intelligence, that Lord Howe was on his way with a powerful fleet, for the relief of the garrison. As soon as this was known, the Spanish admiral prepared to put to sea with the combined fleet, the French division having been reinforced with 1500 soldiers to supply the losses which they had

sustained during a cruize of fifteen weeks; and it is singular enough that, while lying in the bay, the whole fleet suffered dreadfully for want of provisions and water."

"On the 18th of September an exchange of prisoners took place. Three hundred and thirty-five persons saved from the batteries were sent back to the Spanish lines, and highly did these men extol the praises of their British enemies; they said the English shared their provisions and their beds with them, and supplied them with clothing. The French in particular, who had been prisoners, declared in the camp, with tears in their eyes, they would sell their shirts at any time to release an Englishman who might fall into their hands. They also gave a piece of information to the Duke de Crillon, which could not have been at all agreeable—that the garrison was well supplied with the best of provisions, fruits and vegetables in great abundance; that the Spaniards had smuggled in these articles in the night time."

On the 24th of September the Spanish admiral received an express from Madrid, announcing the departure, on the 11th of the month, of the British fleet from Spithead, for the relief of Gibraltar: as soon as this was known, two thousand troops were embarked on the Spanish ships of the line in the bay. On the 9th of October the Spanish admiral received certain intelligence, that the British fleet under Viscount

Howe had been seen off Lisbon on the 4th, steering to the southward with a fair wind. Soon after a frigate arrived, and stated she had been chased by the look-out ships of the British fleet. Still the combined fleet remained at their anchors in Algesiras Bay. And here we may stop for the present, and return to the fitting out the expedition in England for the relief of the fortress, no account of the above-mentioned tremendous attack of the floating batteries and its issue having reached England till after Lord Howe's departure from its shores.

The admiral, being apprised of his destination, lost no time in completing the necessary preparations for the fleet proceeding to sea. While these were going forward, and the ships and transports were assembling at Spithead, his Lordship and the nation were doomed to experience a severe loss, by that unexpected calamity, which deprived them of the services of a gallant, highly accomplished, and amiable officer, the Rear-Admiral Kempenfelt. On Thursday, the 29th of August, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Royal George suddenly filled, and almost instantaneously went down. "It is with inexpressible concern," says Lord Howe, "that I have occasion to inform you of the loss of the Royal George, which ship, being upon the heel this morning, suddenly overset, filled, and sunk. The captain is much bruised, and some few of the people (I fear not many) have been saved: but I have not

the satisfaction to hear that the rear-admiral is among the number. Much as this misfortune is to be lamented, I esteem the loss of that officer the most interesting circumstance attending it, as regards the detriment to the King's naval service. A fresh wind and lee tide prevents me, by this express, to add any particulars respecting this unhappy event."

A monument in the church-yard of Portsea commemorates this melancholy catastrophe, by which fatal accident, it is stated, about nine hundred persons were instantly launched into eternity, among whom was that brave and experienced officer Rear-Admiral Kempenfelt.

Very erroneous opinions were entertained of the cause of the loss of the Royal George, which were however corrected by the evidence on the court-martial, so as to satisfy the members of the court that it was not the heeling of the ship that caused her to sink, but that "from the short space of time between the alarm being given and the sinking of the ship, the court was of opinion that some material part of her frame gave way, which can only be accounted for, by the general state of the decay of her timbers, as appears upon the minutes." Admiral Milbank deposed that he saw her in dock at Plymouth; found her so bad that, to his recollection, there was not a sound timber in her; the officers of the yard said she was so very bad, they could scarce find fastenings for the repairs she underwent. Sir John

Jervis confirmed what the admiral had stated. It was therefore the general opinion that the whole side had given way bodily; and it was supposed that, on this account, the Navy Board discountenanced all attempts to raise her, which might easily have been done, from a conviction of the state in which she would have made her appearance, and which must have sealed their, or rather their officers', condemnation.

On the 1st of September the Admiral received orders to embark two regiments in the fleet for Gibraltar, and to take under his charge certain transports with stores and provisions for the relief of the garrison, together with such outward-bound trade as should be ready and willing to accompany him. His fleet was now increased to thirty-four sail of the line, six frigates, and three fire-ships; and Vice-Admirals Barrington and Millbank, Rear-Admirals Hood and Hughes, and Commodore Hotham, were placed under his command. This splendid fleet sailed from Spithead on the 11th of September. The number of ships of war and the convoy, when off the Start, were counted to be from 175 to 179 sail. When off Ushant they amounted to 183 sail; before reaching Cape Finisterre a gale of wind blowing with great violence dispersed the convoy; but after the weather cleared up 168 sail were in sight, and the following day 183 were counted. This is mentioned merely as a proof of the extreme attention that must have been paid to the transports and trade, several of whom had

frequently made signals of distress, and the weather was generally squally and extremely hazy.

The many delays, which more or less attend the care of all convoys, allowed the Commander-in-chief to practise the fleet in evolutions by signal; and in these operations he must have felt a great loss in the untimely death of Rear-Admiral Kempenfelt, one of the few officers that had taken up Lord Howe's plan of numeral signals when he was a captain, and of whom the following anecdote is related. Being Captain of Admiral Geary's flag-ship when in 1780 he commanded the Channel fleet, he was constantly in the habit of exercising the ships by his signals, when the weather and other circumstances would admit. One day a fleet of ships, supposed to be that of the enemy, hove in sight; the signals were resorted to, but, in the hurry and confusion of preparing for battle, they somehow or other were not managed so well as when made at more leisure. Geary at last grew impatient, and going up to Kempenfelt, and laying his hand gently on his shoulder, exclaimed with a good-natured earnestness, "Now, my dear Kempy, do, for God's sake, do, my dear Kempy, oblige me by throwing your signals overboard, and make that which we all understand—'Bring the enemy to close action!'" So little, half a century ago, were numeral signals understood in the British navy! The following extract from a letter of Lord Howe, dated 10th of September 1779,

will convey some notion of the importance he attached to this subject:—

"I should be glad to know what part of our signals have been adopted; I should thence be able to form an opinion of the principle upon which that great machine (the grand fleet) is to be put in motion. Our signals were adopted rather for a single squadron; and, though most of the articles might be applied to a larger force, (fleets being composed of squadrons collectively arranged,) the necessary continuation of the signals being different, the propriety of their use under different circumstances will vary also. In the disposition of them I had those objects in view. But the choice to be made of the expedients which any set of signals has provided for, will constitute, as we know, the ability of the flag-officers." In another letter he observes, in speaking of signals, "Among other causes for regret, I think the omission of officers who have served in fleets, and who may expect, from their rank in the service, to be called upon, in not being prepared with some system, resulting from their own experience and reflection, is very principally to be regretted."

The following extract of a letter on a more general subject of naval tactics, written in October 1789, (the year after he resigned the situation of First Lord of the Admiralty,) is so excellent, that no apology is required for inserting it here:—

"The looseness of our present system of tactics in

the navy, if any system may be properly said to exist, is such that I cannot say I have quite made up my mind upon the plan that I would recommend for publication, were I in circumstances for being called upon to give an opinion on the matter. The digest you have made of those which have yet appeared in practice, and your additions to them, invite me to resume that train of thinking, and will help me very much in the arrangement of my ideas, as I can find leisure, or rather powers of application, to make any progress on the subject. I have deemed it very possible that this country may have to put to sea, in a future war, from thirty to forty, fifty, or even sixty sail of the line, in one collective body, similar to the state of things towards the end of the last and commencement of the present century. It has not appeared to me, that we have any common opinion among us, how such a force is to be trained and conducted to act with uniformity and effect; and much less when it is considered, you will have little if *any* opportunity to mould it into any form of discipline, before the moment that it is brought into the presence of an enemy. But we have commentators in abundance, who resolve freely that this or that system is too complicated, or too obscure for practice. Had such of them had practice themselves, they would rather turn their thoughts to the simplifying and amending those systems already adopted for the occasion; and they would know that, in the conduct of fleets, as of

seamanship (applied to the management of a ship in different states of the weather), means of enlarging their capacities in professional science are afforded almost every day. I am therefore much persuaded that it will be better for every man, who looks forward to command, to perfect his own conceptions in the higher lines of service, and wait to bring them forward, when he is nominated to act in a directive capacity. Officers then compelled, by the occasion, to co-operate in a system which involves their personal interests in the event, will direct their attention to give it validity."

Indeed, almost to the latest hour of his life, Howe's mind was actively employed on naval subjects, and particularly on such matters as are connected with the proper management of fleets. No wonder that, on the present occasion, when he had in contemplation an enemy with whom he might be engaged in battle, possessed of a force of three to two, as compared with his own, he should feel solicitous that the several squadrons under his command should promptly and correctly execute such movements as he should think fit to order by signal. One of them, he had proved by experience, could not be depended on, and with such odds as he was likely to have to contend with, the least false movement might be fatal. That his mind was fully occupied with the most important business committed to his charge, will appear from the following anecdote, the authen-

ticity of which can be vouched for by undeniable living testimony.

One day when lying-to to collect the convoy, a signal was made from the Victory for Vice-Admiral Barrington and the captains of his squadron to come on board. When assembled in his cabin, Lord Howe said to Barrington, "there is no doubt the combined fleet opposed to us amounts at least to fifty sail of the line, and I have been thinking whether, from our superior state of discipline, and general knowledge of tactics, we could not devise some plan to counteract the inequality of force, and whether, for instance, a considerable advantage might not be gained by the inferior squadron, by attacking the superior in the night. It is a thought suddenly come across me, and as we have no better employment just now, we may as well discuss the question. I should therefore, my dear Admiral, like to know your opinion on this point, and also that of the several captains; and if you please we will follow the practice of courts-martial, and begin with the youngest." Each of the captains, supposing it might be a favourite plan of the admiral, gave opinions more or less in favour of it, until it came to the turn of Sir John Jervis, of the Foudroyant, who said, that although there had been little or no difference of opinion among his brother officers, he must give a dissentient voice to his lordship's suggestion, and declare most decidedly against any such night attack, even though

the commander-in-chief might be in favour of it; that, in his opinion, such confusion would be created, that friends might fight with each other instead of with the enemy; and he was moreover against a night action, as it would deprive the British fleet of the advantage of making use of his lordship's admirable code of day signals, while those for the night were very imperfect. Admiral Barrington said he entirely agreed with Jervis in all he had said, adding, that he preferred daylight, if it were for no other reason than that it would then be seen who did and who did not do his duty, and that if there happened to be a white feather in the fleet, it would then show itself—"give us daylight, my lord, by all means, that we may see what we are about"—

"Give me to see, and Ajax asks no more."

And thus the matter ended.

Having reached the latitude of Cape St. Vincent, the commander-in-chief sent a frigate on the 8th October to obtain intelligence from the Consul of Faro, respecting the motions of the ene[illegible] in the bay that he might regulate the cond[illegible] or 56 guns. It so as to secure the most commo[illegible]hips (the Italian introduction of the supplies for t[illegible]e eastward, that main end and aim of the expedition. On [illegible] on she returned with advice that the combined fleet[illegible]ht the enemy, consisting of 50 sail of the line, [illegible]he anchored in Algesiras Bay, which was further[illegible]ured roborated by neutral ships recently from Cadiz. [illegible]r-

the receipt of this intelligence Lord Howe summoned the flag-officers and captains more particularly concerned, to communicate to them the intended disposition for covering the passage of the transports to the anchorage under the protection of the guns of Gibraltar. At the same time suitable directions were ordered to be issued to the masters and superintendents of the store-ships and transports.

The next day, the 11th, the fleet bore up for the Straits, the convoy under the immediate charge of the Buffalo and Panther taking the lead. The fleet proceeded in three divisions, the third and centre squadrons in line of battle ahead; the second squadron in reserve; the Victory leading ahead of the third squadron. At noon the fleet was steering through the Straits. The masters of the transports, either from inattention to signals, or disregard of their instructions, or from not being fully aware of the strength of the current constantly setting into the Mediterranean, were unable to fetch Rosia Bay; [illegible]nce was, that four of them only (without [illegible]rom the enemy's fleet lying in the [illegible]e appointed anchoring stations and [illegible]oes. The Spaniards, in fact, only [illegible] on the following morning, safe at [illegible]ond the reach of the guns of their [illegible]ory passed to the eastward of Europa [illegible]he fleet, and hauled up towards the [illegible] The two following days were em-

ployed in covering the remainder of the transports as they worked up to the back of the rock round Europa Point, in order to land the stores, provisions, and ammunition, and to remove the troops from the ships in which they were embarked; but from the state of the weather, and the difficulty of keeping the transports collected, it was not till the 17th that this difficult and harassing service was accomplished.

On the 12th Captain Curtis waited on Lord Howe from General Elliot. He gave an account of what happened to the enemy's fleet in the bay on the night of the 10th instant, in which they experienced a violent gale of wind. It then consisted of forty-seven sail of the line, with three of two decks (54's) not of the line. Of this number seven were of three decks, two Spanish and five French: he stated that the S. Miguel was driven on shore at the Ragged Staff, another on shore near the Orange Grove, and one upon Punta Mala, supposed to be the Terrible; and that two were driven to the eastward by the gale, one of them a three-decker; that there remained forty sail of the line, and three of 54 was for the protection of these two s officer says) which were driven to th Don Louis de Cordova put to sea w the 13th, in the hope, at the same tim intercept the English convoy, and supplies for the relief of the garrison Europa Point, and passed the night

fectly becalmed; while Lord Howe and his convoy were to the eastward of the Rock; and an easterly wind springing up, carried them all into Gibraltar, amidst the joyful shouts and acclamations of the garrison.

Lord Howe, as usual, makes no parade in his public despatch nor, from what is stated therein, would any one be led to conclude otherwise than that everything went on smoothly, and that the transports and store-ships were conducted into port with all imaginable facility. He only says that, "in the morning of the 14th, the fleet being to the southward of the enemy, six or seven leagues, and the wind changing soon after to the eastward, the opportunity was taken to pass such of the store-ships, as were then with the fleet, into the bay; that on the 17th the rest of the store-ships were likewise anchored in Rosia Bay; the troops embarked in the ships of war, together with a large supply of powder from the fleet, being landed at the same time; and the wants of the garrison thus amply provided for in every respect, I proposed taking advantage immediately of the easterly wind for returning through the Straits to the westward." This however was considered as a masterly movement; it was quite certain that the combined fleet, so very superior in numbers, could not do otherwise than make a show to follow him; he therefore drew them down off Cape Spartel, thus giving time and scope for the store and provision ships to land their

cargoes unmolested, while a fair opening was also afforded for their return out of the Straits to proceed to England.

And with regard to the partial action he subsequently had with the combined fleet, he says, " at break of day on the 19th the combined force of the enemy was seen at a little distance to the north-east. The British fleet being at that time so nearly between Europa and Ceuta Points, there was not space to form in order of battle on either tack, I therefore repassed the Straits, followed by the enemy. The wind changing the next morning (the 20th) to the northward, the combined fleets, consisting of forty-five or forty-six ships in the line, still retained the advantage of the wind.

" The British fleet being formed to leeward to receive the Spaniards, they were left uninterruptedly to take their own distance, at which they should think fit to engage. They began their cannonade at sunset, on the van and rear, seeming to point their chief attack on the latter; and continued their fire at a considerable distance, and with little effect, until ten at night. It was returned occasionally from different ships of the fleet, as their nearer approach at times afforded a more favourable opportunity for making any impression on them.

" The enemy hauling their wind, and the British fleet keeping on all night with the full sail directed before the commencement of their fire, the fleets were

now much separated. But as I conceive the knowledge of the relief of Gibraltar may be of much consequence at this time, I take the opportunity, when it is now almost calm, and the ships are refitting the damages they have sustained in their masts and rigging by the enemy's fire, to forward this despatch without further delay."

In a subsequent despatch of the 24th he says, the damages sustained and the repairs required, were not completed until the 22nd; but as it was mostly calm in the mean time, no advantage could have been taken to follow the enemy who, on the 21st, were standing away to the W. N. W., even if the masts had been earlier secured; and he adds, "I have only to express my regret that the little confidence the enemy showed in their superiority, by keeping always as near as they could haul to the wind, prevented the full effect of the animated exertions, which I am sure would have been made by every officer and seaman of the fleet under my command, if they could have closed with their opponents. But as I judged such nearer approach could not then be seasonably attempted, I made no change in the disposition of the ships, as formed at first to receive the enemy.

"For similar reasons I do not dwell more particularly on the merits of the flag-officers of the fleet on the same occasion; being certain they would disregard any commendation of their efforts against an enemy, who declined giving them an opportunity to

discharge the duty of their stations in repelling a more serious attack. But at the same time I am reminded of the advantages, derived to his Majesty's service, from the extensive knowledge of the difficult navigation within the Straits, acquired by, and the unremitted assiduity of, my first captain Leveson Gower."

In an action between two such numerous fleets, it is impossible the commander-in-chief can, from his own observation, ascertain the conduct of the several ships in their respective divisions. Howe therefore, anxious to satisfy himself that "Every man did his duty," called upon the two vice-admirals of the van and the rear squadrons, Barrington and Millbank, himself being in the centre, to report the state of the damages sustained, the numbers of killed and wounded, and generally the conduct of each in the battle. Admiral Barrington says, "The van of the enemy had a choice of their distance, and happy should I have been, if they had thought proper to have closed more with us; but such was the conduct of the French rear-admiral, that he twice fired a single gun, and finding that the last went far over the Goliath, hauled up and began the action. I have the greatest satisfaction of informing your Lordship, how much I am satisfied with the good conduct of Commodore Hotham, and all the captains of my squadron, who kept the finest close connected line I ever saw during my service at sea."

Admiral Millbank says, " I have very great satisfaction in saying, the whole of the ships of my squadron deserve my warmest commendation for their conduct in the rencontre which passed with the enemy on the evening of the 20th instant. A very superior force meditated the design of cutting off our rear, in which they would probably have succeeded, had we not preserved a very close line. The attack was made by a vice-admiral bearing Spanish colours, seconded by a French commodore, two three-deckers, and thirteen sail of the line, few of the latter of which came into action; and I have great reason to judge that those, who did engage us, met with a very severe reception."

By the return of killed and wounded, it appears the numbers were, killed 68; wounded 208; total 276.

Notwithstanding the favourable and indulgent manner in which the gallant Commander-in-chief speaks of the conduct of all under his command, it appears in his private journal that, through ignorance or inattention, or both, perhaps also from the bad sailing of some of the ships, he had great cause to complain of their not keeping their stations; and it may be suspected that this was one reason for his wishing to give or accept battle in the open sea, and for that purpose he repassed the Strait. " The ships," he observes, " were so much separated by the difference of their drift in the current of the

Straits, and so little activity still apparent, or press of sail made (notwithstanding a repeated signal) to get into their stations that, being unable to form the ships to the northward, without ranging too close to the back of the hill, I made the signal to alter course *together*, for repassing the Strait on the starboard line of bearing, to gain more sufficient space in the ocean, if the enemy should be inclined to follow the fleet to the westward. The rear-admiral of the blue (Hughes) mistaking his station, and drawing several ships also of his division (the Raisonable, Bienfaisant, Berwick, and Fortitude) out of the proper course, leading to their stations, it became necessary to apprize him by signal and message thereof; and the other ships were suitably directed to the same purpose, as they could be hailed in passing the Victory."

What a complete answer would this have been, had the gallant commander condescended to notice it, to those captious cavillers who presumed to censure him for repassing the Straits of Gibraltar.

With a fleet thus separated, and the inability of forming the ships into their proper positions, to offer battle with a disparity in numbers of thirty-four to forty-four sail of the line, in so narrow a space, and in the midst of a perpetual current, to have brought on an engagement in such a situation would have been an act of madness, and utterly inexcusable, even if the enemy, which is not probable, should have

courted it. The commander-in-chief indeed found it difficult enough to form the line advantageously in the open ocean. He had again occasion to make a signal to the rear-admiral of the blue, who had his mainsail up, and yet much to leeward of his station. He says, "The rear-admiral's idea appears to have been, that as he was then in line with the body of the rear, (equally wide of its proper station) he was duly posted. The signal he is reported to have made for calling the Raisonable down from her properly assumed station with the body of the fleet (and which was as properly disregarded by her captain) appears to authorize this supposed motive for his misconduct." But there was another important consideration, not noticed by Howe, for his not risking a battle in the current of the Straits. The Spaniards were in possession of both shores; they had numerous ports to retreat to along their own coast in the event of a defeat, where they could refit and repair their damages. Howe, on the contrary, had no port of refuge to look to, that would afford him the means of repairing the damages or refitting a single ship. The barren rock of Gibraltar had been relieved, but it offered no relief whatever to a disabled fleet, which indeed in a crippled state would be little able to work up to it against the current.

On the morning of the 21st, the combined fleet was seen eighteen or twenty miles distant, standing to the northward, with all sails set. At noon, half

their topsails were down in the water, and very shortly after they disappeared altogether. The English fleet, having stood in the same direction with the enemy, at the rate of one, two, and three knots, the wind very light, and nearly calm, and seeing nothing more of them, it was deemed inexpedient, in the reduced state of the water and stores, as well as the damaged condition of some of the ships, longer to continue the pursuit, especially as there was very little doubt they were gone into Cadiz to repair their damages. They had failed in their double object of reducing the garrison to surrender, first by storm and then by famine; and Lord Howe had succeeded in his, which was that of relieving it. He therefore, conformably with his instructions, detached Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Hughes with a squadron of eight sail of the line, with orders to proceed to the West Indies, where the rear-admiral might have an opportunity of practising and perfecting his naval evolutions. On Saturday, the 2nd of November, he bore up with the rest of the fleet for England, detaching on his way Vice-Admiral Millbank, with six sail of the line, with directions to proceed to Cork; and on the 14th, in the morning, he arrived and anchored at St. Helens, having most ably and gloriously accomplished that grand national object, the relief of Gibraltar, towards which the eyes, not of England alone, but of all Europe, had been turned during the whole of that year. In Paris, the

capture of Gibraltar, by the floating batteries, was exhibited in one of the theatres as a *spectacle,* which drew down rapturous applause from thousands every night.

On the address of thanks on the peace of 1782, Mr. Fox said, in speaking of the relief of Gibraltar, "It was not in England only that the character of Lord Howe was admired; a foreigner of distinction had written from Paris in the following terms: 'Every one here is full of admiration at the conduct of Lord Howe. All praise his bravery and humanity. All wish to take his conduct for their example. This makes us think that, *in your country,* a court-martial will be appointed to try him whenever he arrives in England.'" It was on this occasion that the great Frederick of Prussia paid his tribute of approbation to Lord Howe, in a letter written in his own hand, and sent to him, through his minister at this court.

Again, on voting the navy estimates for 1783, Captain John Luttrel took occasion to notice, "That if he wished to pass over the consideration of what was due to the great spirit and masterly conduct of Lord Howe, and the British fleet under his command, which relieved that garrison, it would not be attributed to any doubts he at present entertained, that a more essential piece of naval service to this country never was performed, and that it ought to be ranked among the foremost of those gallant ex-

ploits, which had raised his lordship's name so deservedly high in his profession, and in the eye of our enemies."

It may be remarked as a curious coincidence between Lord Howe's thoughts of a night battle, on the passage out, and the fact of his having fought one practically; for it was ten o'clock at night before the firing ceased, and there can be very little doubt, from the determined character of Howe that, if Barrington and Jervis had coincided in opinion with the other officers, he would have succeeded, with his best sailing ships, in obtaining the weather gauge, and fought the combined fleet the whole night.

Howe must have been highly gratified with the gallant and indefatigable exertions of his friend Curtis, as represented to him by General Elliot, who writes thus in a letter to Lord Howe, dated Gibraltar, 15th of October 1782.

"Unknown to Brigadier Curtis, I must entreat your Lordship to reflect upon the unspeakable assistance he has been in the defence of this place, by his advice, and the lead he has taken in every hazardous enterprize. You know him well, my Lord, therefore such conduct on his part is no more than you expect; but let me beg of you not to leave him unrewarded for such signal services. You alone can influence his Majesty to consider such an officer for what he has, and what he will in future, deserve wherever employed. If Gibraltar is of the value in-

timated to me from office, and to be presumed by the steps adventured to relieve it, Brigadier Curtis is the man to whom the King will be chiefly indebted for its security. Believe me there is nothing affected in this declaration on my part."

Captain Curtis for his signal services at Gibraltar received the honour of knighthood, and had a pension bestowed on him of 500*l.* a year, payable out of old stores which, as appears by a note from Mr. Pitt to Lord Howe, was afterwards granted for life on the Civil List. General Elliot writes to Sir Roger Curtis, and says, "You have a right to all public testimonies from Gibraltar, as joint commander; in good faith we owe you many medals; we shall be proud of your accepting the German one." And when on his return he was created Lord Heathfield, he is indignant that Curtis should merely be knighted, and says, "It is a shame I should be overloaded, and so scanty a pittance be the lot of him who bore the greatest share of the burthen." In writing to Lord Howe, he says, "I was oppressed to find myself overloaded with favours and emoluments, whilst Curtis, my sole adviser and partner in every branch of service, as well as chief of a most important department, was scantily rewarded, and without whose assistance we should have been hard run, perhaps too hard, and at last shut up too close within our walls."

General Elliot, indeed, never ceases to acknowledge the important services of Lord Howe and

Captain Curtis, and to express his grateful feelings on all occasions to both. To Curtis he says, "Do offer my respects to my Lord Howe, but I believe you can't venture to tell him that I and the rest of us, half sea-officers, are in admiration and astonishment at what passed under our eyes—what a glorious manœuvre through the Straits!"

Again, he says, "The Duc de Crillon returned a lieutenant and midshipman carried away by the crew of the St. Michael's guard-boat, by whom I learn the high reputation Lord Howe has established among the Spaniards for his great abilities." Again, he says, "My respects, if you see the moment, to Lord Howe—that's a man I should like to be well with, especially as a private man."

When the brave general had arrived in England, and was created Lord Heathfield, he left no stone unturned to be of service to Captain (now Sir Roger) Curtis, to whom he thus writes: "The great man whom you and I love and admire, no doubt has enough to struggle with; he alone can attempt such frightful labours—is it possible to succeed?—you know best. I wish to be on the number of his admirers; not alone for his greatness, but also for his goodness; he must mean the public good." And again, in 1785, when Lord Howe was at the head of the Board of Admiralty, he says, "I hope the good and great man will never leave the vessel whilst she can swim. *You* can tell him how to stop the leak

with a seaman's jacket (alluding, probably, to the leak in his pinnace), for if he goes, all's gone."

Neither were the French or Spaniards ungrateful. The kind and courteous offices of humanity shown to a distressed enemy which distinguished the old nobility of both countries, were not wanting on this occasion. Before the arrival of Howe, when the garrison was reduced to the lowest ebb of provisions,—when hope of relief had long been deferred but not abandoned, —the brave General Elliot received from the Duc d'Artois a packet of intercepted letters, which he obtained from the court of Madrid, for the express purpose of conveying them himself to Gibraltar, to which place he was proceeding, along with the Duc de Bourbon, to join the besieging army. At the same time the Duc de Crillon, the commander-in-chief of the combined forces, in sending this packet, wrote to General Elliot, informing him of the arrival of the French princes in the camp, and conveying to him the strongest expression of their regard and esteem for his person and character; and he took this opportunity to request his acceptance of a small present of fruit and vegetables for his own use, and of some partridges and ice for his staff; and understanding, he said, that the general lived almost entirely on vegetables, begged to know what particular kinds would be most acceptable, in order that he might send him a further supply.

The reply of the general was such as became the

veteran hero. After an expression of regard for the princes and the duke, he informed the latter that, in accepting his present, he had broken a resolution he had made from the commencement of the siege, and hitherto strictly adhered to, never to receive or procure any provisions for his own private use; that every article was sold publicly in the garrison, in order that the private soldier, if he had money, might purchase equally with the rest; and that he made it a point of honour to partake, whether of plenty or scarcity, in common with his brave fellow-soldiers. He entreated therefore that no further favours of this kind might be heaped upon him, as he could not apply them to his own use. When the preliminary articles of peace were signed, the Duc de Crillon sent a flag of truce to inform General Elliot thereof. Such were the courtesies interchanged among brave men, though engaged in hostilities with each other, before the execrable French rebellion destroyed all confidence and kind feeling between man and man, and turned them into brutes.

CHAPTER VI.

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY.

Lord Howe appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, *vice* Keppel—Quells a mutiny in the Janus—Keppel restored by the coalition ministry—Debates in the Lords—Change of ministers—Lord Howe re-appointed to the Admiralty—Duties of this department, and qualifications of its Chief—Difficulties and annoyances of—Patronage of—Promotions and appointments—Comparative statement of Lord Howe's promotions, and those of the present time—Debates in Parliament on Lord Howe's brevet promotion—Character of Lord Howe, as given by both parties—Orders in council for the promotion of admirals—State of the list of captains—Proposal for a retired list—Motion on the subject in the House of Commons—Lord Howe resigns—Cause of it—Question on the eligibility of naval officers or landmen being at the head of the Admiralty—Lord Howe created an English peer, as Earl Howe and Baron of Langar.

THE Noble Viscount, on reaching England, seems to have indulged a hope that the prospect of a speedy and a long peace might permit him to remain in the enjoyment of domestic ease and felicity with his family, at his favourite retreat in Hertfordshire, after passing a short time at Bath for the benefit of his health. The peace came, but in the hope of its long duration, and the enjoyment of domestic retirement, he was doomed to experience disappointment. It would appear from a letter, dated Bath the 9th of

January 1783, addressed to Sir Roger Curtis, that some overtures had been made to him to take his seat, as First Lord at the Board of Admiralty, and that Sir Roger had offered his services. "My happiness," says Howe, "will not be less than that which you do me the favour to profess, if it were consistent with your circumstances for you to be with me, in the civil capacity your professional knowledge enables you so well to discharge the functions of. The idea never would have occurred to me to propose it; unanimating and laborious at least, as such a station must prove, whether in its civil or nautical concerns." This was, at any rate, a civil refusal.

A run had been made in both Houses against the naval administration, and the ministers were beaten in the Commons, in the debate on the preliminaries of peace. Lord Keppel, seeing how matters were likely to go, took the opportunity of retiring from the high and responsible situation he then held at the head of the Admiralty, on the plea that he would not subscribe to the terms of peace. Accordingly, a new patent was sealed on the 28th of January, in which the name of Howe was substituted for that of Keppel; and his board consisted of Admiral Hugh Pigot, Charles Brett, and Richard Hopkins, Esquires; the Honourable John Jefferies Pratt, John Aubrey, Esq., and the Honourable John Leveson Gower, his late first captain.

Lord Howe soon experienced that the seat to which

he had been called was not a bed of roses. A spirit of mutiny broke out in the ships at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Sheerness, particularly at the first place, where the crews of several of them proceeded to place their officers in confinement. This mutinous spirit was not occasioned by any feeling of dissatisfaction, on account of alleged ill treatment by their officers; it originated in suspicions, fomented by certain ignorant or mischievous people from the shore, that the ships, just returned from foreign service, would not be paid off, but refitted and sent abroad again. There were several circumstances that appeared to confirm this suspicion. Some few of the ships were ordered into harbour, others were kept at Spithead and in Plymouth Sound; but that which gave the strongest countenance to such a report, was an order to fit the Janus of 44 guns for sea, though she had just returned from the West Indies; which order led the crew to believe that they were to be sent again to that station. The men became outrageous, confined their officers, and refused to let their captain come on board. Being fully aware that measures would be taken to compel a return to their duty, they resorted to such precautions as were thought necessary to defend themselves against force. The captain at length got on board: he harangued the men on the impropriety of their conduct; but having imprudently said the ship was to be kept in commission, and destined for the American station,

they called out that they had heard enough, and would listen to no more; rushed down to their quarters, with lighted matches, ready to fire on the first appearance of any meditated attack from without. Other ships had shown symptoms of insubordination, and parties of men were daily rioting on shore. Sir Thomas Pye, the port-admiral, became alarmed at this state of things, and wrote in a desponding tone to the Admiralty, which induced Lord Howe to come to the determination of going down to Portsmouth himself, and alone, to enquire personally into the circumstances on the spot.

Immediately on his arrival, he proceeded to Spithead, having sent word to the Janus he was coming on board. The side was manned by the mutineers, and the side-ropes put over by the crew, and his Lordship was received with the usual honours and the greatest respect. He proceeded to the quarter-deck, and desired all hands to be called; told them how much grieved he was to hear of such mutinous conduct in British seamen, whom he had always found orderly and obedient, and for whose welfare he had hoped they knew he took a very deep interest; but that it was utterly impossible he could give any countenance whatever, let the cause be what it might, to disobedience of lawful authority, and disrespect to their officers. He assured them that he always had been, and was then, more than ever, as became the high and responsible situation he had the honour to

hold, ready to listen to any complaints they had to make, and to comply with any reasonable request they might address to him; and told them that he had now come down expressly to know what their grievance was, and what had induced them to adopt a line of conduct so unbecoming British seamen. He assured them they were acting under the influence of a false report; that the Janus would be paid off, although it had been decided by his predecessor she should be kept in commission; and, to say the truth, he could not but regret she was not so to be kept, as it was with great reluctance he parted with so fine a ship's company as that then standing before him; however, he again assured them she should be paid off. Immediately on this, these brave but deluded men gave three hearty cheers, having, as they said, the fullest confidence in the declaration of his Lordship, whom they had long considered as the "Sailor's friend."

A few months after this, a mutiny also broke out in the Raisonable, Captain Lord Hervey, on her return from the Leeward Islands. This ship was ordered to proceed to Chatham to be paid off: the men declared they would not go round, but be paid off in Portsmouth harbour, and were preparing to unmoor the ship, when Lord Hervey, having observed this, caused twelve of the ringleaders to be instantly seized, and ordered into close confinement, which so intimidated the rest, that they returned to their duty,

and took the ship round to Chatham. To put a stop to this spirit of insubordination in the fleet, an example was found to be absolutely necessary; and for this purpose a court-martial was held on the twelve prisoners on board the Raisonable; seven of them received sentence of death; three to have each three hundred lashes, and two were acquitted. Three of the seven were executed, but, at the intercession of Lord Hervey, the punishment of all the rest was remitted.

Such was the commencement of the new and unpleasant situation to which Lord Howe had succeeded, the cause of which occurred in the course of the first three months after his acceptance of office, a continuance in which, indeed, to his great gratification, lasted only about that time. In the distracted and unsettled state of the country, after a long and exhausting war, and the violence of parties in the two houses of Parliament, the ministers, finding themselves unable to conduct the affairs of government with credit to themselves, or advantage to the country, formed a coalition with their opponents, and the public saw, not without surprise and disgust, Lord North and Mr. Fox sitting together on the Treasury Bench. This change, by restoring Admiral Lord Keppel to the head of the Board of Admiralty, released Lord Howe from a situation he never sought or coveted. On the 16th April, a week after he quitted his post, he thus writes:—"Before you receive this, you will

most probably have heard of the changes in the government, which have restored me to the enjoyment of as much ease and indulgence as the weakened state of this country will allow me to taste."

During his short administration of the affairs of the navy, he spoke but once in the House of Lords. It was in the debate on the Preliminaries of Peace. He gave a detailed account of the state in which he found our navy, as compared with that of other powers. He recounted the transactions of the late campaign, and attributed a great deal of our success to chance; for, in a competition of strength with the enemy, we were greatly inferior: many of our ships, he observed, were in a poor condition; that, for instance, on which he hoisted his flag, the Victory, was very bad and very filthy: and he concluded by observing that, if no other good attended the present pacification than the mere breathing time it gave us, we ought to count the interval a happy one, and instead of idly flinging away our remaining strength in unnatural squabbles among ourselves, unite and endeavour to make the best use of our time, in recruiting against the possibility of future hostility. This, he trusted, their Lordships' good sense would consider to be the advice of patriotism, and not of party.

Lord Keppel maintained that our naval force was superior to that of the late enemy, and that he computed our ships of the line, good, bad, and indifferent,

to be one hundred and nine. On which Lord Howe observed, he could not subscribe to the mode his Lordship took of estimating the naval strength of Great Britain, under the description of good, bad, and indifferent; good and indifferent a prudent man would think was stretching the account to the utmost verge of show; indeed he could hardly say, utility; but to include the *bad* in the statement, would be dangerous computation indeed.

Lord Howe's time, during the remainder of the year 1783, was chiefly passed at Bath, Weymouth, and Porters. He appears rarely to have attended the House of Lords, and very seldom to have spoken; the Admiralty in fact was, on very few occasions, brought into debate. Once, however, in the discussion that took place on the Loan Bill, he made an attack on the new administration; and, among other matters of crimination, he said, "The Admiralty department was, he must own, the least active of any great department, with a view to reform." Lord Keppel said, that plans of reform could only be attended to in times of peace, and complained of the Noble Earl (Shelburne) having endeavoured insidiously to interfere with the office in a manner extremely inconvenient and, as he thought, impolitic, for it tended most unseasonably to diminish the influence and authority of the Admiralty Board over the subordinate boards, by making them accountable to the Treasury. The Earl of Shelburne said, that Lord Howe had ex-

pressly come into office, on an agreement to push the reform of his department with the same vigour that had distinguished the Noble Duke's (Richmond) Ordnance Office reform. He added, that Lord Howe, when he came home from Gibraltar, complained of the bad discipline of the fleet, insomuch, that the Noble Viscount had declared the peace absolutely necessary; since he did not think it safe for a man to trust himself with a fleet, while such a total want of discipline prevailed. Lord Keppel, in reply, observed, that Lord Howe neither directly nor indirectly made any such complaint to him; and as to discipline, that lay not with him, but with the commander-in-chief; at least he should have thought so, had he been at the head of the Gibraltar fleet: but as the Noble Viscount was absent, it would be better to say no more on the subject till he could be there to answer for himself.

It appears somewhat strange that a debate on such a subject as a loan should have diverged into a personal question, in no way connected with it, for it ended by Lord Keppel charging the Noble Earl with having interfered with his office through clerks, unknown to him, and in an underhand manner. At this Lord Shelburne took fire, and said he would answer the charge in one word, It was false. [*Order, order.*] He meant not to apply the word to the Noble Viscount, but that the information, from which he had spoken, was a falsity. He scorned any thing

like underhand work, as much as the Noble Viscount. If the Noble Viscount alluded to the Victualling Office, the abuses in that office were gross and scandalous, and called loudly for reform. If he meant the Navy Office, that was necessarily and naturally connected with the Board of Treasury; one of its officers, a respectable and worthy character, having frequently attended him;—and it ended by Lord Shelburne saying, the Noble Viscount had made a direct attack upon him.

The coalition administration had to endure many severe attacks in the Commons, from Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas particularly, and Mr. Fox's India Bill finally upset them. On the 18th December 1783, at twelve o'clock on Thursday night, a messenger delivered to the two Secretaries of State, Lord North and Mr. Fox, his Majesty's orders, "that they should deliver up the seals of their offices, and send them by the Under Secretaries, Mr. Frazer and Mr. Nepean, as a personal interview on the occasion would be disagreeable to him." It was on this occasion, the weather being wet and boisterous, that Lord North is said to have exclaimed, "What! turn us out in such a night as this!"

The new ministry stood as under:—

Right Honourable William Pitt, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Marquis of Carmarthen, Foreign Secretary; Lord Sidney, Home Secretary; Duke of Richmond, Master General of Ordnance; Lord Vis-

count Howe, First Lord of the Admiralty; Mr. Henry Dundas, Treasurer of the Navy.

Thus was Lord Howe a second time brought into an office, for the duties of which he had little relish, and probably, for some of them, as little qualification; having frequently professed himself to be a very bad politician. It could, therefore, have been acceptable only, as connected with the naval service, to all and every part of which he was devotedly attached. The prominent situation in which the Noble Lord's career in the navy, and above all his moral worth and strict integrity as well as his professional character, had placed him in the public mind, pointed him out to the minister, as one eminently suited to fill the office of First Lord of the Admiralty. He stood decidedly at the head of the naval profession, and enjoyed the undivided confidence of all ranks in the service. The appointment of such a man was hailed as a happy omen for upholding the character of the navy.

The other qualifications necessary to enable this minister to fulfil all the duties of that important branch of the naval service, are not required to be of the very highest order. Good sense, honesty, and impartiality, are the chief requisites to carry him smoothly and plausibly through the routine of business, provided a sufficient sum of money be granted on the Navy Estimates, adequate to the building, repairing, and maintaining such a fleet as shall be

equal to any exigency the country may require; that the selection for promotion of officers, who have rendered brilliant and meritorious services, be left to his choice and discretion, and not interfered with from other quarters; and that he be assisted by able and honest professional colleagues. Under these conditions, the minister appointed to the head of the naval department may sleep upon a bed of roses; will meet with nothing but smiling faces at his levees, and be hailed as the *decus et tutamen* of that strong arm of power, on which the safety, honour, and prosperity of the British empire mainly depend. But, unfortunately, this is not always, it may be said seldom, the state of the case. He must be content to rub on with such funds as the Cabinet, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, are willing to give him, and the House of Commons to vote; and must not expect to act altogether as a free agent in matters of promotion. Perhaps the following brief outline will be found to convey the general nature of the qualifications, character, and duties of a First Lord of the Admiralty.

The chief of the naval administration of the United Kingdom undertakes one of the most important and responsible offices of the state. To him, and to his co-adjutors, are intrusted the proper management and direction of the great arm of our strength, and with it the highest interests of the community. Without a well-appointed and commanding naval force, the

British army, and the lofty spirit of Britons, would be confined to their own shores at home, and become powerless and unknown abroad; their commerce would fall into decay, and pass into other hands, and we should once more be reproached as the *Britanni toto ab orbe exclusi*, instead as now known and feared, and respected, in every part of the globe.

In the selection therefore of the minister, who is to give to this powerful machine life and vigour and its proper direction, it must be of the first importance that his qualifications to fill the office with credit to himself, and benefit to the country, should be well considered—he should possess a general knowledge of naval history and jurisprudence—good sense and unblemished integrity—a sound judgment and great discretion—a patient and placid temper—a courteous deportment and civil demeanour to all—an easy access to officers of every rank; and a ready and obliging acknowledgment of all applications addressed to him in writing—he should make himself well acquainted with the services and the claims of individuals of the several ranks of officers; and although, in the present overgrown state of the lists, it is not possible to comply with the multitude of claims preferred, more or less strong, yet a kind manner of receiving and replying to them, personally or by letter, goes a great way to soften the bitter pangs of disappointment, the unavoidable result of a non-compliance with what is requested.

The two principal and most painful sources of vexation and annoyance, which a First Lord of the Admiralty must lay his account of being doomed to undergo,—and they are brought perpetually before him, and if he be endued with the proper feelings of humanity, must perpetually distress him—are, the pressing solicitations for promotion, and for employment. The scenes of disappointed expectation—of enduring poverty and hopeless misery—that are constantly forcing themselves upon him, and which he has not the means of relieving, none but himself can form any idea of; and in portioning out the small pittance of patronage left at his disposal, and in weighing the respective claims of the numerous candidates, it is needless to say what conflicting opinions and sentiments regarding the superiority of such claims—what doubts and hesitation—must pass through his mind in endeavouring to make a just and proper decision in the selection of the fortunate individual. He has also to bear in mind that, while the claims of the officer are under consideration, the claims of the service are not to be lost sight of; and whenever the one, however strong and cogent, may be in opposition to the other, there is but one course left to arrive at that decision.

The *matériel* of the machine requires no less attention than the *personnel*, though of a different and less delicate nature. To watch over the civil concerns of the navy—to check all unnecessary expendi-

ture in the various establishments—to keep up a supply of stores, and an efficient fleet, whenever its services may be called for, while every attention is paid to economy—require a constant, vigilant, and inquisitive superintendence. Ships must be in readiness, whether in war or peace,—large fleets in the former case, and in the latter, guard-ships, experimental squadrons, or what are now termed demonstration ships, or ships kept in a certain state of preparation, besides others of various sizes to satisfy the demands of the mercantile interest; for the governors of colonies, always clamorous for naval protection—and others for the suppression of the Slave Trade, packet service, &c. The naval establishments at the ports;—the dock-yards, victualling yards, medical, transport, and marine departments;—require occasionally the personal inspection of the First Lord of the Admiralty, for these are the great absorbents of naval expenditure. Lord Sandwich had done as much as he could venture to do in controlling naval expenses, but Sir Charles Middleton, the Comptroller, (afterwards Lord Barham,) a flag-officer, acting with his board under the king's patent, was frequently found to be too much for him.

About the time of Lord Howe's appointment, a clamour prevailed in the country against the large public expenditure, generally, which induced Mr. Pitt to exact from his Lordship, (and indeed from the heads of all departments entrusted with public mo-

nies,) a pledge for the observance of the strictest economy in every branch of the naval service. This necessarily brought him in immediate collision with the Navy Board, in whom the greater portion of the expenditure of naval money was vested. In 1784 he commenced his economical measures by proposing a reduction in the number of commissioners (captains in the navy), as being more than was necessary. Sir Charles Middleton combated the proposition, assigning a great many reasons why they should not be reduced, and concluded a long argumentative letter by observing, that "when the public cannot afford this, I shall request his Majesty's acceptance of my resignation." Lord Howe's reply is, as usual, brief and much to the purpose: "Upon an attentive perusal of your letter, I perceive we differ in opinion on the propriety of the arrangements, which are the subject of it; as I found, on my late inspection of the yards, we likewise do in several points concerning the service of the ports. By the arrangements at the Navy Board, the senior of the two *extra* nautical commissioners is retained. But as you intimate a probability that our difference of opinion, in the former instance, will induce you to quit your situation in the civil line, I will only add that I flatter myself the public will have the benefit of your abilities in the military branch of your profession, in that case, when the king's service may require it." A great difference of opinion, indeed an evident want of

cordiality, and a stiffness of expression, appear in the whole of the correspondence between the First Lord and the Comptroller; and such has so frequently been the case between the Admiralty and the Navy Board, that it is somewhat surprising the services of the latter board were not earlier dispensed with. A part of the question, at issue with Lord Howe, seems to have been the propriety of a flag-officer sitting at a civil and subordinate board, while *captains* were mostly lords of the Admiralty.

Lord Howe's second administration commenced also with another determination—the restriction, as far as possible, on naval promotions, by which a gradual reduction of the half-pay lists would be effected; this of course was a most unpopular measure in the service. He did not, however, as has been imputed to him, stop all promotion; on the contrary, considering the state of the lists at that time, and as they stand at present, the promotions made by Lord Howe greatly exceeded the proportion made in the latter period. It may be curious to see how the lists and the promotions stood at the respective periods just mentioned.

	State of the Lists in		Numbers promoted in five years preceding	
	1787.	1836.	1787.	1836.
Flag-Officers . .	54	165	9	35
Captains . . .	418	755	71	55
Commanders . .	177	823	47	86
Lieutenants . .	1329	2976	127	185

To the above numbers may be added, in the latter period, 100 retired commanders, and 182 lieutenants

with the rank of commander. Besides the above numbers, in the brevet promotion of 1787, sixteen admirals were then made, and forty captains passed over. In the brevet (the only promotion of admirals in five years) of 1836, thirty-five (as above) were made admirals, and thirty-four captains were passed over. It cannot be said therefore that Lord Howe had not his full share of patronage, as compared with that of the present day.

Though Lord Howe acted in strict conformity with the then existing Orders in Council for regulating flag promotions, so great a number of old captains being set aside, and placed upon the superannuated list or, as it was then called, the list of yellow admirals, caused very general discontent in the service. The subject was taken up in both houses of parliament, and provoked, in the Commons particularly, several angry discussions. On the 20th of February 1788, Lord Rawdon moved in the Lords, that "An humble address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to take into his royal consideration the services of such captains of his Majesty's navy as were passed over in the last promotion of admirals." Lord Rawdon's speech was exceedingly temperate, but condemned the system which allowed veterans, who had bled in defence of the country, to be passed over at the caprice of a minister. He argued that the Board of Admiralty seemed to be conscious that they had done an injury

to those men who had been superseded, and, as some compensation, had offered every one of them the half-pay of a rear-admiral. If his Lordship had looked at the Order in Council of 1747, he would have found it was therein directed that they should enjoy the said half-pay, and that no discretion rested with the Admiralty, provided such captains had served at sea since the commencement of the then existing war with Spain; which was further modified by another order of 1771, granting the said retirement to all captains set aside, who had served, with the approbation of the Admiralty, in any war immediately preceding their being so set aside.

Lord Howe contended that the First Lord of the Admiralty was responsible for the good conduct and well-being of the naval service, and that, with the responsibility, he must necessarily be entitled to exercise his own discretion, in every branch of the executive duty of the Admiralty Board; it was painful to him, in the exercise of that discretion, to set officers aside, and it would be invidious in him to explain the particular reasons which operated on his judgment, as well as cruel in the House to desire him to do so: their Lordships, he said, must be aware that an officer who had displayed great bravery in the command of a ship, might not be qualified to command a fleet; and that, if the House thought proper to take upon themselves the promotion of military officers, he should feel himself eased of the greatest anxiety in his

situation and, of course, escape from the painful responsibility of office; he assured their Lordships that patronage was not so desirable as might be imagined, and that he was sure, out of twenty candidates for an appointment, to disappoint nineteen, and by no means certain of pleasing the twentieth. That he looked upon the half-pay of a rear-admiral, given to those officers superseded, on no other ground than as a compensation for past services.

Lord Sandwich thought it extremely improper for the House to interfere with the executive government. Let their Lordships only consider for a moment the embarrassments which must be felt, if promotions of admirals were to be made by the House of Lords. If the House of Lords took upon themselves a promotion of admirals, one lord would rise in his place and say, "Pray don't pass over my brother, make him an admiral!" Another would stand up in that place and intercede for his relation. Nor would applications be confined within these walls; each noble lord would be pestered at home to intercede for different captains; nay, even the ladies—and the House well knew the irresistible fascination of female influence—would catch hold of a peer's hand, clasp it with ardour, and say, "My dear lord, pray get my son made an admiral." But he would rather recommend the Commons; they, no doubt, would receive numberless petitions from the different boroughs, and their constituents would send them up instructions who

were the fittest persons to be voted admirals. Ridicule apart, he said it had been found, at different periods, extremely inconvenient and detrimental to the service, that promotions to flags should be governed by seniority. In 1747, he said, the Board well knew that there were on the list captains in a superior degree qualified to command fleets; but standing low down, the difficulty was how to get at them, without loading the public with an intolerable expense. In concert therefore, his Lordship said, with two noble lords, the one a land, the other a naval, officer—the late Duke of Bedford, and the late Lord Anson—he had taken his share in planning the superannuated list, and he had been the person in whose hands it had principally been brought to bear. At that time eight admirals only were made, and nineteen captains passed over; and yet there was no complaint then; no motion before that House to address his Majesty on the subject, nor any idea of injustice or partiality entertained.

Lord Rawdon replied, and the motion was negatived without a division.

Not so however in the Commons. Mr. Bastard brought forward a motion on the omission of two individual officers, by name, in the flag promotion; made an intemperate speech, and totally misunderstood the Order in Council of 1747; maintaining that the yellow list was an institution, provided only for such officers as were unfit to serve, either from

want of capacity or from infirmity; not one word of which is to be found in the said Order in Council. He argued that, if it was left to the Admiralty to make a selection, the tendency would be to regard nothing but servility and meanness; to manifest a studious attention to the caprice of a First Lord of the Admiralty; to show a readiness to run on his errands: to be his flatterer, his follower, and perhaps his pimp.

Mr. Beaufoy made an able reply; and Mr. Pitt pointed out the danger of the House of Commons interfering with the duties of the First Lord of the Admiralty; he rebuked the mover, Mr. Bastard, hoping the very gross manner in which he had described the offices, that candidates for promotion must assume, was rather to be imputed to an intemperate phrase having escaped him, in the warmth of debate, than to any settled design of throwing out an insinuation of an illiberal nature, with a view to fix a stigma on the character of the First Lord of the Admiralty. He maintained that the superannuated officers were not, as had been said, rejected, degraded, and stigmatized; but that the very reverse was the fact. It was an honourable retreat from service, a comfortable provision for advanced years, and a fit reward for meritorious services. He observed that, since its institution, 139 captains had been promoted to the flag and 244 superannuated; and he asked if the honourable gentleman considered these brave and gallant officers degraded, or that they were passed

over from incapacity? Mr. Bastard seeing the sense of the House against his motion, with its consent withdrew it, giving notice that, on a future occasion, he would move for a committee of the whole House, (which he did on the 18th of April) to inquire into the conduct of the Admiralty on the late promotion of admirals. The debate was long and somewhat stormy, but the arguments were nearly the same as before. The motion was lost by a majority of sixteen, and this induced the mover to give notice that he would bring it on again in another shape; which was done on the 29th of the same month, when the motion was negatived by a majority of 51.

In all these debates, none of the opposition members attempted to impeach Lord Howe of any interested or personal motive, for the selection made in the promotion. Mr. Fox condemned the promotion as unjust to certain individuals, but distinctly declared that, if he was asked whether every captain, who had merely negative merit as an officer, ought to be made an admiral, he should answer—no. The office of an admiral, he said, ought to be considered in two views; and the right view undoubtedly was to *prospective* service, and an eye to *selection* was most proper and justifiable. Mr. Grenville, in a future debate, agreed with Mr. Fox that promotion should be bestowed with a view to future service—and asked, did not the honourable gentleman say *future service?* Mr. Fox nodded assent. The other view

was to reward meritorious past services in some other way. Sir John Miller assured the house, that he fully absolved Lord Howe's want of integrity, while he as decidedly condemned his judgment. He considered him as a man distinguished for his abilities, his integrity and his justice—and he lamented that during the residence of the noble Lord at the Board of Admiralty, whom he believed to be as honest and as brave a man as any that existed, and to whose conduct and command he would most freely confide that fleet, that should fight for the last stake of the country, a precedent should be attempted to be established, which had both irritated and disgusted every seaman of Great Britain, except only a few gentlemen of that profession,—those present in the house. Admiral Lord Hood said, the noble First Lord of the Admiralty stood high in the opinion of his profession, as a brave and skilful officer; he had hitherto continued unimpeached in honour, and unimpeached in point of integrity. It was not likely therefore that his conduct, in the late promotion, would have been actuated by any indirect motive. It was impossible for him to imagine that an officer, who had trodden the deck of honour, could, upon his holding the naval administration, plunge into the sink of corruption. Mr. Grenville said, no man had attempted to suggest that the First Lord had been influenced by any improper motive in the late promotion.

These debates took place in February and April, and Lord Howe retired from the Board in July following. There is some reason to suppose that the disgust he felt at this interference, on the part of the Lords and Commons, and the abuse heaped on the Board, on account of the promotion which had been conscientiously made, might have had some share in determining him to resign, though, as will appear presently, that was not the only reason. It may be observed, with regard to the Orders in Council of 1747 and 1771, that they were not calculated to give satisfaction to any party; and that the two subsequent ones of 1804 and of 1816 were still less so; they were indeed so absurd, as well as unjust and oppressive, that when his late Majesty was Lord High Admiral, he abrogated the whole of them and procured a fresh one which, in its operation, is somewhat less objectionable, but in a very small degree. By the Order of 1816 all captains, not employed in the *last* war, preceding a brevet, however short (as that of Algiers or the hundred days), would be passed over, and the number in that predicament would embrace the greatest portion on the list. With a view to remedy this gross injustice, the Order in Council of the Lord High Admiral of June 1827 provides that captains, with unblemished character, who shall not have declined or avoided service, shall (provided the promotion shall extend down to their standing on the list) be superannuated with the rank of retired rear-

admiral, when passed over in any promotion of flag-officers. Then with regard to the effective flag, it provides that captains (if by their characters and *other qualifications* they be considered *eligible* for promotion) shall be deemed eligible, if they have commanded one or more *rated* ships four complete years during war, or six complete years during peace, or five complete years of war and peace combined.

There is still some absurdity, and great injustice in this regulation. The injustice and hardship of this Order consist in the difficulty, perhaps it may be said impossibility, of a great number of captains, however high their character, having a chance even of being able to procure appointments to command ships for the specified periods, especially during peace; in consequence of which the very best officers in the service, being thus disqualified, must be passed over—the absurdity is, that officers, however old, infirm and helpless, having completed the proper time of service, and being therefore qualified, *must* be promoted to the rank of rear-admiral, and placed on the effective list: for it may be observed, that the *other qualifications* of eligibility, mentioned in the Order in Council, have not been taken into any consideration. It is more than probable therefore that selection, for which Lord Howe was so much abused in the House of Commons, will be the next rule resorted to; and that officers must be content to rest their claims, where alone they can best be known, on the equitable decision of the Board

of Admiralty, which can, or ought to, have no other object than to select those, who will do most credit to its administration of naval affairs, by their characters, services, and efficiency.

When the state of the list of captains is looked into,—when the ages of those within two hundred of the top are considered, and the little probability of another brevet promotion speedily happening, and when, if ever, it does happen, the few that can be deemed eligible for the effective flag,—the necessity of doing something to clear that list must be apparent; and perhaps the simplest and most equitable mode of proceeding would be, to let it be generally understood that, on application to the Lords of the Admiralty, any captain within the two hundred, "who shall not have declined or avoided service," will be allowed to retire with 365*l.* a year, (or some other sum) for the remainder of his life, with the rank of retired rear-admiral. A stipend to this amount, commencing immediately, would probably be considered by many preferable to an indefinitely deferred annuity of 450*l.*, the half-pay of a rear-admiral.

A motion it seems has been made by a captain of the navy, and carried, in the House of Commons, to clear the captains' list of non-effective officers by survey, an ordeal to which few captains will probably submit. A voluntary retirement must be far more acceptable than a compulsory one thus procured. But while clearing the captains' list, are the admirals,

composed as they mostly must be, of old and inefficient captains, and not the better for increasing years,—are they to be exempt from survey, and to go on in their promotion from the lowest to the highest rank? Is an *inefficient* captain, made, as by the present Order he must be, an *effective* rear-admiral, and some twenty years afterwards, when

> "———————— his way of life
> Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf,"

is he to be promoted to a full admiral, with nearly a double increase of half-pay?

It has often been asked, why not apply the regulation of one promotion in three deaths to flag-officers? The measure might be made a good one, and highly beneficial to the service, provided selection, as in the promotion of captains, was to be the rule; that is to say, on the death of any three admirals, let a captain of a certain standing on the list be *selected* for promotion to the rank of rear-admiral; and on the death of three admirals of any one class, let one be promoted from the next lower class, also by selection. Thus would the list of admirals be improved by adding to it yearly three or four efficient captains. It requires no little nerve to set aside long established usage, especially when the interests of great bodies of men are concerned; but this is an age of change, and also of improvement. The change proposed in the present case is sanctioned by, and somewhat modified from, the recommendation of the Committee of the House

of Commons on sinecures; which has been already noticed. Their first recommendation regarding the abolition of marine officers of the navy has just been carried into effect, and from the amount of salaries abolished, six admirals have received pensions of 300*l.* a year each, fourteen captains of 150*l.* a year, and two field-officers of marines of 150*l.* each. The second recommendation will probably be also acted upon—it expresses "the anxious hope of the Committee that no addition to the number of flag-officers in the navy, any more than to that of general officers in the army, will in future be made, *except on very strong grounds of public necessity.*"

In speaking on the subject of his resignation with Commissioner Fanshawe, an old acquaintance and friend, Lord Howe made no secret of what induced him to quit office. He said he had consented to take the situation along with a party, who had pledged themselves to each other, and to the public, to economy; but that when he wished to carry it into practice, to the utmost possible extent compatible with the good of the service, he found himself constantly thwarted and opposed. Mr. Pitt, he said, stood above all need of support, and made no requisitions for naval patronage; but Mr. Henry Dundas complained he could never obtain any appointments from the Admiralty for his Scotch connexions and dependents, and was continually carrying his complaints to Mr. Pitt of Lord Howe's

intractable rigidity in this respect. "Mr. Pitt," he says, "*talked* of economy, but I *practised* it." Wearied out at length, he requested he might be removed, which, after some months' consideration, was granted, and Lord Chatham, a landman and a soldier, of a less inflexible character, succeeded to his place.

That Lord Howe was heartily tired of his situation at the Admiralty, long before he was allowed to resign, and that the debates in the two houses of Parliament, honourable as they were both to his personal and professional character, did not tend to abate his disgust, there appears to be sufficient proof. In a letter dated Porters, the 27th of July 1788, he says, "It would be unreasonable to dwell now on the subject of my resignation. I shall only say that the necessity for it was made known, under the circumstances then existing, *many months* since. It would be as little to the purpose, were I to form conjectures when, or whether any, such idea as I had entertained of an appointment similar to that I proposed for you, will take place, having no communication now with the parties who will have to determine upon it. But I hope you never will have reason to think your character and conduct not enough in estimation, to secure every requisite degree of countenance in your future professional pursuits."

It has been a subject of discussion among naval men whether, as the army has always had a military

officer for its Commander-in-chief, the First Lord of the Admiralty ought not also to be a professional—that is, a naval man. The cases are not parallel—the King reserves to himself the command of the military forces—he delegates his power over the navy to a Lord High Admiral, or Lords Commissioners. It is however one of those questions on which "much may be said on both sides." Naval officers in general would naturally enough ask, who is the description of person most likely and best qualified to do justice to those who have had the labouring oar in fighting the battles of the country, in the issue of which is involved all that we hold dear? And the answer would as naturally be, "a naval First Lord;" and yet they will find that, on taking a retrospect, many bitter complaints have been made from their own corps against a purely naval administration, on the score of partiality. How indeed can it be expected that a professional man should be able to divest himself of prejudice in favour of those individuals, with whom he has associated, sometimes almost exclusively for years, in a confined and uninterrupted intercourse? How can it be expected he should cast aside the best feelings of human nature, and disregard those early and ancient friendships, from the moment he takes his seat at the head of the Admiralty Board?—that he should turn aside from these companions of his early days, who gained laurels by his side, who shared with him the dangers "of the

battle and the breeze," and participated in his pleasures? Such are the officers, whether most fit or not, who will expect to share, and who will share, largely in a naval lord's patronage.

Besides, the education of a seaman is not exactly such as is suited to fill an important place in the ministerial cabinet. The time that is taken up in acquiring that degree of professional skill, and eminence of character, which could alone justify the appointment to such a situation, almost precludes the acquisition of that general knowledge, and of those broad and comprehensive views, inseparable from the character of a great statesman. Take the list of admirals, as it now stands, and let any one ask himself, how many flag-officers there are upon it whom, he conceives, the minister would deem qualified to fill the office of First Lord of the Admiralty?

Then, if distinguished success against the enemy be allowed to furnish a criterion of good management, as it regards good ships and good officers, it will be found that the proudest triumphs, the most brilliant victories, have been achieved by fleets and squadrons, prepared and distributed under the direction and management of landsmen as First Lords. Thus the battle of Rodney with Don Juan de Langara, and his splendid victory of the 12th of April 1782; the defeat of the French fleet on the 1st of June 1794; the victories of Cape St. Vincent and of Camperdown in 1797; of the Nile in 1798; the battle

of Copenhagen in 1801; and the total defeat of the combined fleets of France and Spain before Trafalgar—were all obtained by fleets prepared and commanded by officers appointed by First Lords who were landsmen. Though Lord St. Vincent actually sat at the Board when the battle of Copenhagen was fought, the preparations were made under Lord Spencer's superintendence. It was also a naval lord who presided on the 12th of April 1782, yet the arrangements and disposition were actually made by his able predecessor Lord Sandwich. It was on this occasion that Lord North, addressing himself to the new ministry in the House of Commons, observed, "It is true you have triumphed, but you fought with Philip's troops." It must be admitted however that, without the assistance of two or three able, honest, and judicious naval co-adjutors, no landsman, whatever his talents might be, could attempt to carry on the numerous duties of this important office. On the other hand, a naval First Lord may not always be disposed to seek for such assistance.

As Lord Howe held the situation in time of peace, and was not called upon to prepare any sudden armament, but only to keep up an efficient fleet, the only difficulty against which he had to contend was the pledge given by ministers, but not strictly adhered to, for the observance of rigid economy, in a conscientious compliance with which he found himself unable to satisfy the numerous claimants on his

patronage. This, however, did not appear to disturb the equanimity of his temper; he told every one candidly what he could and what he could not do; he is said never to have made, and consequently never to have broken, a promise—a charge which every First Lord of the Admiralty has found it difficult to escape from. Nor has he ever been accused of undue partiality, or of giving his countenance or sanction to any measure that could be construed into what, in the vulgar tongue, is usually called a job. He strenuously resisted all attempts, from whatever quarter they came, to make the public service bend to private accommodation, of which the following may be taken as an instance. Sir Charles Pole being appointed, in the Russian armament, to a guard-ship at Sheerness, Lord Boringdon as a west country friend applied to Lord Howe, when First Lord of the Admiralty, to have him removed to one stationed at Plymouth, as more convenient by being near to his family connexions. "My lord," said Howe, "it is the first time I have heard of a private convenience spoken about within these walls."

But that which appears to have annoyed Lord Howe most, was the urgent demand of the minister to keep down the navy estimates, when the fleet required a larger sum to preserve it in an efficient state than the government was willing to grant. Thus, for the paltry saving of 150,000*l.* a year, the building and repairs of the fleet were restricted; for instance,

we find the sum set down for building and repairing ships in 1786 to be 800,000*l.*; in the following year it was reduced to 650,000*l.*, making a difference, as above stated, of 150,000*l.* Such parsimony, for it is not economy, when applied to such an object, is the worst policy that could be pursued. It was that, among other things, which drove Lord Howe from the helm of naval affairs; and, in later times, it had the same effect on one of the ablest, most intelligent, and honourable men that ever sat at the head of the Board of Admiralty,—Mr. Charles Yorke, who resigned his office because the minister would not consent to grant, for naval purposes, what he considered necessary to prepare and preserve the fleet in that state of efficiency, which the honour and the interests of the country demanded.

A month after Lord Howe's resignation, on the 19th of August 1788, his Majesty, in acknowledgment of his many and important services, military as well as civil, was pleased to create him an earl of Great Britain, by the title of Earl Howe; and at the same time bestowed on him the title of Baron of Langar in Nottingham, to descend to his eldest daughter and her heirs male.

CHAPTER VII.

COMMAND OF THE CHANNEL FLEET.

Appointment to command in the Channel Soundings—To hoist the union at the main, in the Queen Charlotte—State of the Flags—The ships and flag-officers under his command—Secret orders from the cabinet—Ordered to strike his flag—promises himself the pleasures of rural dissipation—On the temporary separation of his daughter—Made vice-admiral of England—His mind always in the service—Appointed a second time commander-in-chief of the Channel fleet—Mast-heading—Puts to sea—Gets sight of the French fleet—inferiority of our ships in sailing—partial action of the Latona—Fleet returns to port—State of the ships—The blockading system—Clamour against Lord Howe—Epigram.

THE rapid progress of the French Revolution had begun to alarm men's minds; and the conduct of Spain towards England, regarding Nootka Sound, (another affair of about an equal importance with that of Falkland Islands) were considered of sufficient moment to demand the preparation of a naval armament of considerable extent, to be employed as occasion might require. On the 22nd June 1790, while Lord Howe was residing with his family in Grafton-street, he received a commission from the Admiralty, dated the 13th May, appointing him to command a squadron of his Majesty's ships, to be employed in the Channel soundings, or wherever his

Majesty's service should require; and this was followed by an order to proceed to Portsmouth, and take under his command certain ships therein enumerated. With this order he immediately complied, and, conformably with his Majesty's command, hoisted the Union flag at the main, on board the Queen Charlotte of 100 guns.

This peculiar mark of distinction was conferred for the first time since the early part of the century, on Earl Howe, and no admiral has after him been honoured with that distinguishing mark of approbation for brilliant services, except Lord St. Vincent, when he commanded the Channel fleet. It is now, in fact, considered as the flag appropriated to the admiral of the fleet, who is usually the senior admiral on the list, and who, when he arrives at that distinction is, from age and infirmity, seldom if ever fit for active service at sea. The last time it appears to have been hoisted at the main-top-mast-head, prior to that of Lord Howe, was by Vice-Admiral Benbow in 1701; but many officers so late as 1714 were allowed occasionally to wear it in different parts of the ship. It is somewhere stated that the reason for granting the Union flag to the Lords Howe and St. Vincent was, that the seconds in command were in the same class of rank; and that the same flag at the same mast-head must have created confusion. This is quite incorrect; Lord Howe was Admiral of the White, seniority 1782,

whereas his second, Sir Alexander Hood, was only Vice-Admiral of the Blue, seniority 1787.

It is generally known that, until the early part of the present century, the red flag at the main had no existence; but it is not known why the three classes of that rank should have been left incomplete. There is an idle story, prevalent in the navy, that one of the Van Tromps, or De Ruyters, who so often and so bravely contested with us the sovereignty of the sea, carried off, in one of the actions, our red flag of a full admiral; it has even been said that they stole it from Sheerness or Chatham, when they blocked up the Thames; there is not, however, the slightest foundation for either of these stories. Whether indeed England ever had a red flag at the main, or not, remains at this day an undecided question; as is also that of this colour having only two classes, whilst the white and blue squadrons were complete. An admiral of the white then held the highest rank in the navy, except the admiral of the fleet. The battle of Trafalgar, if it did not restore, at least contributed mainly to give, to the navy the red flag at the main. A new edition of the General Instructions was then preparing, which came out the following year, and in them the three ranks of the three colours were made complete. That battle, moreover, having so completely humbled the naval powers of France and Spain, suggested to the consideration of the Board of Admiralty, with

the approbation of the Government, the omission of that arbitrary and offensive article, which required naval officers to demand the striking of the flag and lowering of the top-sail, from every foreign ship they might fall in with. That invidious assumption of a right, though submitted to generally by foreigners for some centuries, could not probably have been maintained much longer, except at the cannon's mouth; and it was considered therefore that the proper time had come when it might, both morally and politically, be spontaneously abandoned.

Towards the end of July, Lord Howe was directed to proceed with the ships at Spithead, when ready, to Torbay, and there to take under his orders a squadron placed under the command of Admiral Barrington. By the 17th of August the whole of the ships were collected and ready for sea; and on the following day he sailed with a fleet, consisting of thirty-five sail of the line, nine of which were three-deckers, with six flag-officers in command of divisions, namely, Admiral Barrington, Vice-Admiral Lord Hood, Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander Hood, and the three Rear-Admirals Sir John Jervis, Sir Richard Bickerton and Hotham. In standing towards Ushant, he received information from three different quarters that the Spanish fleet was at sea, from twenty-five to thirty sail of the line. From the 19th of August to the 12th of September, the noble Earl took occasion, whenever the state of the

weather would permit, to exercise the fleet with exemplary patience, in naval evolutions: at one time, as appears in his private journal, he ordered the whole fleet to be repeatedly tacked together; "but neither the distances of the ships from each other, nor of the columns, with no more sail abroad than might be requisite on service, were properly observed." At another time, he employed the fleet in tacking and wearing together, "that the captains might be better able to judge of the proportion of sail necessary for keeping their stations in presence of an enemy;" but, he adds, "it did not appear that they had acquired the facility and correctness in those essential movements that is to be desired."

No further information was gained of the Spanish fleet until the 12th of September, when, having ascertained that they had returned into port, and that the embargo which had been laid for some time past was taken off, the admiral judged it most expedient for the good of the King's service, and conformably with his instructions, to bear up and proceed to Spithead, where he anchored his fleet on the 14th of that month.

Here he received orders to proceed to London, where, he says, "Had a conversation in the King's ante-chamber with Mr. Pitt and Lord Chatham, respecting the future appointment of the Channel fleet, in case it should be deemed expedient for hostilities to be commenced against Spain:" and on the 30th he received a letter from Lord Chatham, conveying

the King's commands to regulate his conduct of the fleet, conformably with a cabinet minute enclosed therein, notwithstanding any other orders of the same date from the Admiralty, and to repair off Ushant; but on the 4th of November he received notice from Lord Chatham, by express, that the differences with Spain were accommodated, and that he was to postpone the sailing of the fleet until further orders. Those "further orders," received towards the end of December following, were to "strike his flag and come on shore," which Lord Howe calls his dismission. "I received," he tells his captain, "my dismission last night, and you, of course, as I conclude, have died with me. I have advised Captain Christian (the second captain) of my professional annihilation, that he may do the needful on his ships' books. The necessity I am under to be present at St. James's tomorrow, on occasion of my dismission from my late public appointment, keeps me in town for the parliamentary discussion intended next Monday. And though I promise myself to have done with professional concerns for some length of time, in the enjoyment of rural dissipation, I shall not therefore less keep in remembrance the testimonies of regard you have shown, in my late situation, to your ever faithful servant."

One of his daughters was maid of honour to the princesses; and in reply to a letter on the subject of parting with children, he says, "You reason, my

dear Curtis, upon duty of parents to their children like an old married man, and you reason justly. But Lady Howe's situation and mine with respect to our daughter has not required those efforts of self-denial, which a permanent separation would need. After the King's birth-day she will have to enter upon a tour of duty with her colleague in office, Lady Caroline Waldegrave, at monthly intervals. The great goodness she experiences from the royal family makes her attendance at all times grateful to her, and consequently highly so to us."

During the year 1791 Earl Howe was suffered to remain unmolested by the cares of office or of naval command, "in the enjoyment of rural dissipation;" but whether engaged in business or pleasure, his thoughts and feelings were as irrevocably turned to naval concerns as the needle to the pole. From the top-gallant-mast-head, down to the kelson, the construction of the ship, her capacity for stowage, and berthing the crew, the nature of her ordnance, her masts, yards, sails, and rigging, every part and portion of the machine passes under his review. "Being a fop," he says in one of his letters, "of long standing, with respect to the embellishments of my ship, as well as in the regularity and neatness of my men, I should receive much pleasure in seeing the Charlotte (his favourite ship), in the improved state you describe." Even the cut of her sails had not escaped his seaman-like eye: he says, "In my search for a

construction and proper fitting of a ship for sailing and fighting service, I overlooked the suitable attention to the figure of the sails. For in looking into a minute of the Brunswick's sails, I perceive a cloth narrower in the foot than in those established for the larger class of 74-gun ships; whereas I meant to have increased the width at the foot, and hollowed the leech of the sails." This is a curious passage, and the more worthy of notice, as a fashion has recently crept into the navy, to alter all the hollow-leeched sails into straight-leeched ones, on pretence that they will stand better and belly less, whereas the reverse is proved by experiment to be the fact; and as they are in other respects objectionable, the old established fashion adopted by Lord Howe has been resumed. Another instance may be noticed of the attention paid by Howe to the minutiæ of the service while on shore. It relates to the safety of the men,—the landsmen and ordinary principally,—by familiarizing them with a little practice to secure themselves upon a yard and to roll up the sail, when in port—that is, by hanging a spare topsail yard a few feet above the booms, and thus give them confidence, and make them acquainted with the management of a sail, before they are required to go aloft, and risk their lives in blowing weather. "This," he says to his captain, "you will please to look upon as a mere suggestion." It is, however, a suggestion which every humane officer acted upon towards the latter part of the last war.

Lord Howe highly disapproved of the orders for drafting men from one ship to the other, leaving their old comrades for strange ones, and officers they have served under for new ones, with whom they are unacquainted. Nelson was most strongly against such a practice. He says, "the disgust of seamen to the navy was all owing to the infernal plan of turning them over from ship to ship; so that men could not be attached to their officers, nor the officers care the least about the men."

Howe and Nelson, widely different as they were in their moral characters, mostly agreed on points of naval service. Both were equally anxious of attaching their men to them; and no mutiny ever happened in ships under their command. It was the opinion of both that, if a commander knew his own comfort and valued his reputation, his first object should be to win the affection of those on whom his character as well as his success in the service must mainly depend.

About this time he received a long letter from Sir Roger Curtis, in which, among other matters, he mentions a court-martial about to be held on a somewhat singular occasion. The first lieutenant of the Saturn (Lieut. Shields) thought he saw a necessity for reprehending the conduct of one of the midshipmen (a mate) of that ship, and ordered him to the mast-head by way of punishment. The midshipman refused to go up *as a punishment*, on which the lieu-

tenant caused him to be hoisted up, in the doing of which the midshipman is said to have received an injury on his ribs. These circumstances soon became known throughout the fleet. The midshipmen take the alarm—call the conduct of the lieutenant tyrannical and oppressive—conceive the honour of their corps violated and disgraced; and circular letters are sent to all the ships, inviting the midshipmen to unite in support of the common cause. A Mr. Moore, belonging to the London, is the person to be tried for being the author of one of these letters. "I never thought," says Sir Roger, "a due subordination in the service, and its discipline, could be maintained by publicly exposing any class of officers to ridicule and public disgrace; and more particularly if the officer, so exposed, was to return afterwards to the exercise of the functions of his office, amongst the same men who had the hour before beheld him exhibited as a culprit."

On this statement Lord Howe observes, "The incident that has given occasion for the court-martial is singular enough. It seems right to try the midshipman who summoned a confederation of the discontented, for supporting the consequence and interests of his corps; but I thought the long exploded usage of sending negligent midshipmen to do penance at the mast-head had grown into the discredit and disuse it merited."

Mr. Moore was tried by court-martial, found

guilty, and in consequence of the very excellent character given him by several officers, was adjudged, only to be imprisoned for the space of one calendar month in the Marshalsea, and to be severely reprimanded. Mr. Leonard of the Saturn, the midshipman mast-headed, demanded a court-martial on Lieutenant Shields for tyranny and oppression, but a court of inquiry only was held, which found no tyranny and oppression, but, on the contrary, that the general tenor of Lieutenant Shields' conduct was the very reverse of tyrannical and oppressive, and that the midshipman had been guilty of neglect and disobedience.

Lord Howe, always kind and considerate to the younger officers particularly, was notwithstanding a strict disciplinarian; but though he would have approved of inquiry by court-martial into the conduct of Mr. Moore, yet, from the observation made in reply to Sir Roger Curtis, it can hardly be doubted that, had his flag been flying, he would have strongly recommended the abolition of so degrading a practice. It continued however till the other day, when, in consequence of one or two cases—one of a singular and aggravating nature, inflicted on a young gentleman not in the service,—the present Board of Admiralty greatly to its credit put an end to so degrading a practice, by circular orders to the fleet for its discontinuance.

During the year 1792, the noble Earl was permitted to remain on shore. On the death of Lord

Rodney in May of that year, he was appointed to succeed him as Vice-Admiral of England, an honorary situation with which he appears to have been highly gratified. He complains in many of his letters about this time of being much afflicted with the gout. "My head and stomach," he says, "have not been so free lately as I could wish from those symptoms of gouty infirmity, which have not been unusual in their appearance towards the fall of the year. Recourse to Bath waters will determine, whether the almost annual return of that troublesome complaint is to take place about the termination of the present, or commencement of the ensuing year."

From one of Earl Howe's letters, dated the 23rd of June of this year, we may learn the folly of attributing, from a series of unseasonable weather, such as we are experiencing at the end of May 1837, an alteration in the seasons for the worse. He says, "Every day the year advances, we may naturally expect we are approaching nearer to the summer season. But we have not seemed hitherto to have made any progress towards that favourable change; the wet and winter blasts being scarcely discontinued, for two days together, in the last two months. It is to be hoped nevertheless that, in proportion as it has been cold and tempestuous, whilst you have remained in port, you will find the weather grateful in all respects when you are at sea."

In December 1792, his correspondence betrays

strong symptoms of being once more ere long called upon for active service. He talks of the lieutenants to be employed, and enumerates the midshipmen by name who are well qualified, and "who have been a little accustomed to our peculiarities." Davis (his old secretary) is not to be refused, if the state of his health is truly consistent with the undertaking; "but it would go to my heart," he says, "to see him languishing under fatigue or infirmities, to which he is no less liable to be affected than myself."

Accordingly, soon after this, namely, on the 6th of February 1793, we find the following entry in his private journal:—"Attended at St. James's to kiss the king's hand on my appointment, by commission, dated the 1st of this month, to be Admiral and Commander-in-chief of the fleet, for the time being, employed, and to be employed, in Channel soundings, &c., with the usual clause added, as in the commission of admiral of the fleet, authorizing the removal and appointment of officers in case of disability or neglect. A commission was at the same time issued, appointing the Captain Sir Roger Curtis to be my first captain, and Captain Christian was re-appointed to the Queen Charlotte, in which I am to embark." The flag-officers proposed, at this time, to serve in the Channel fleet were, the Vice-Admirals Graves and Sir Alexander Hood, second and third in command; and his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, rear-admiral of the red; but no particular ships ap-

propriated to constitute the fleet to be so employed. The Duke of Clarence did not join.

It was not till the 27th of May that Lord Howe was ordered to proceed to Portsmouth, to take the command of certain ships there, hoisting the union flag on board the Queen Charlotte. On the 1st of July he received his secret instructions, in which he was directed to protect the trade of the king's subjects, and molest the ships of war and trade of the enemy: he was informed that intelligence had been received of eight or nine ships having sailed from Brest, in order to join five more from L'Orient and Rochfort, and that his immediate attention was to be directed to the prevention of their return to Brest, or of forming a junction with any other ships from thence; and he was instructed to cause accurate observations to be made, and the best intelligence obtained, of the force collecting at Brest, and to regulate his conduct accordingly, with due regard to the security of Great Britain and Ireland, which was always to be considered *a very material* object of his attention; and, not receiving any further orders, to return to Torbay in a month from the time of sailing; but to be at liberty to prolong his stay at sea, on gaining intelligence that may render such continuance advisable.

On the 14th of July he put to sea from St. Helens, with twenty-three sail of the line, in two divisions, under the Vice-Admirals Graves and Sir Alexander Hood; but before he got out of the Channel the

weather became so boisterous, with rain and fog, that he deemed it expedient to bear up and anchor in Torbay, as the most eligible position for putting again to sea, as soon as the weather resumed any settled aspect. Here he received information from an American vessel, that she had passed the French squadron, consisting of seventeen ships of the line, ten leagues to the westward of Bellisle. He immediately put to sea, and arrived nearly in the latitude of Bellisle on the morning of the 31st of July; and standing towards the land, got sight of the enemy's fleet, their topsails appearing just above the horizon from the mast-head. At sunset they were seen from the mast-head half their courses down, appearing to consist of fifteen sail of the line, with two frigates. The next day, it being light winds, and at noon almost calm, seventeen sail were seen, and a greater number later in the day, keeping nearly at the same distance, and too far off for any correct estimate to be made of their force. Every endeavour was made to approach nearer to the enemy, many of whose ships towards noon were so far advanced upon, as to be seen from the deck.

In the morning of the 2nd of August none of the enemy's ships were in sight. The fleet kept cruising well in with the land for several days, as most likely to intercept the enemy, while the frigates were sent away to reconnoitre, and on the 10th the fleet approached the coast near Brest, with the intention of

looking into that port, conformable with the instructions; but the wind became so boisterous that some of the ships, having sprung their masts, and others having their sails split, Lord Howe deemed it expedient to bear up for Torbay. His attention was here called, by letter of the 14th from the Admiralty, to three points: first, advising him of the time the Jamaica convoy was to sail from that island; second, when the Lisbon convoy was expected to sail; and third, notice of a large French convoy, with several ships of war, to sail from the American ports for France.

On the 23rd he again put to sea, and, meeting with a number of ships that had separated from the expected convoys, detached several frigates to see them safely to their respective ports; and having next provided for the protection of such of the Jamaica trade as had not passed up Channel, by laying-to in their direct course, he returned with the fleet on the 4th of September to Torbay. On the 28th he again put to sea, but meeting with thick and blowing weather from the south-west, by which the heavier sailing ships would probably be separated and driven up Channel, he put back to Torbay; and as he here received information of the two convoys from the West Indies having passed, he waited, by orders of the Admiralty, the arrival of two or three ships of the line, which were to join him from the eastern ports.

During the month of November the fleet made several ineffectual attempts to get permanently beyond the Lizard; in doing so the main-top-mast of one

ship, and the main-yard of another, were sprung, and the fore-yard of a third carried away in the slings. The violence of the westerly gales, with a heavy sea, continued without intermission till the 11th of November, when the wind becoming more northerly and moderate, the fleet proceeded to cruize to the westward; and on the 18th six sail of the line and two frigates of the enemy were seen and chased, but the headmost and best sailers of our fleet had so little chance to come up with them, that they were soon lost sight of altogether. Two of Lord Howe's line-of-battle ships in this useless pursuit each sprung a top-mast.

The inferiority in the sailing of our ships with those of the French was here most apparent. The latter having approached within a certain distance for the purpose of reconnoitring our fleet, "they then," Lord Howe says, "made off with all the sail they could bear with a very fresh wind, with whole top-sails and top-gallant sails set, while double-reefed top-sails and top-gallant sails were as much as almost any of the British ships could well carry against the swell. They were followed on the different tacks they changed to, as the veering of the wind a point or two either way at times would best favour their increase of distance, during the whole day; and in the night, on the larboard tack solely. The Latona, Captain Thornborough, was the only ship that gained very fast ahead of them, and passed, under a repeated fire from three or four of their capital ships, along their line, with the view of getting a station for leading the

advanced ships up to them; and firing upon them, at times, to cut their rigging, up to the close of day." It was afterwards ascertained, that several men in a frigate and two line-of-battle ships were killed and wounded by the fire of the Latona. Lord Howe on this occasion bestowed high praise on the spirited conduct of Captain Thornborough, of which the Lords of the Admiralty expressed their approbation.

On the 25th, the master of a Danish vessel reported that he had been stopped by a French ship, which was one of five sail of the line that had been out about ten days, and which, at the end of fifteen days, were to be relieved by the same number of others. The fleet continued cruizing in the direction pointed out till the 10th of December, encountering constant gales of wind, and a heavy swell of the sea, in the course of which time half the ships at least had received considerable damage; and, as nothing more was seen or heard of the French squadron, the fleet bore up for Torbay, where instructions were received as to the manner in which they were to be disposed of, for the purpose of being refitted,—eight sail of the line and three frigates to proceed to Plymouth, and ten sail of the line and two frigates to Portsmouth.

The crippled state of this fleet, which, from the middle of July to the middle of December, had been constantly at sea, except when occasionally obliged to take refuge in Torbay, proves one of three things; —either that the ships were ill fitted and provided,—

or ill navigated;—or, admitting neither of these, that it was extreme folly to keep them at sea, in the mouth of the Channel and Bay of Biscay, in the autumnal and winter gales, which invariably happen in these situations. His Lordship says, "Other ships of war seem unavoidably necessary for the Channel fleet, to replace those returned with Christian; and, indeed, it seems that some most serious inattention has happened in respect to the state of repair of the fleet, preceding the commencement of the war; for I know not how to believe that the number which have been disabled would otherwise have suffered so much as we have seen this year; and to make other drafts upon the better conditioned ships will very much protract the time when any respectable force can be assembled for our home defence: so that our strength will solely exist in the weakness of our enemy."

Lord Howe, in his private correspondence with Lord Chatham, shows a decided disapprobation of the whole system (which was then, and afterwards, to a much more extensive degree persevered in) of blockading the enemy's ports. To keep a fleet at sea, watching an enemy's fleet lying snugly in port, and ready to start the moment the weather has driven the blockading squadron from the coast, and probably disabled many of them, appears to be a mistaken system, and ruinous in the extreme to the ships themselves, as well as hateful to the seamen, besides being extravagant beyond measure in point of expense. Nothing annoyed Nelson more than the long blockade

of Toulon, the boisterous weather tearing his ships to pieces; in thirty months he left his ship but three times, for about an hour each time. But in his reply to a vote of thanks from the City of London for his perseverance, he says, "I beg to inform your Lordship that the port of Toulon has never been blockaded by me; quite the reverse." He only called it watching the enemy, offering them, at the same time, every opportunity to put to sea. Lord St. Vincent followed, as no doubt he was desired to do, a different system from that of Lord Howe. He persevered in continuing the blockade of Brest, summer and winter, in all kinds of weather without sparing himself, having once kept the sea off Brest for one hundred and three days, without coming into port. The consequence of this was that, when the late Lord Melville succeeded to the head of naval affairs, he found a fleet of worn-out ships, utterly inadequate to meet the combined fleets of France and Spain; but by doubling and cross-bracing, and patching them up, a fleet was, with great exertion, got together, which under Nelson fought and conquered at Trafalgar. It was on account of the crippled state of our ships that it was found absolutely necessary to have recourse to the merchants' yards for the building of a certain number of 74-gun ships which, though ridiculed as the "forty thieves," turned out much better than there was any reason to expect. What Lord Howe recommended was this—to keep a fleet at St. Helens, greater or less as circumstances might require, with

a few detached frigates to gain information of any movements in the opposite ports of the Channel coast of France—ready, in case of emergency, to put to sea at the shortest notice;—to station the grand fleet, with a suitable number of frigates, in Torbay, constantly kept in good order, and ready in all respects to start in the event of the enemy's fleet from Brest putting to sea: the two contending fleets might then engage on something like equal terms, as to their state and condition, each of them fresh from their respective ports; whereas a blockading squadron, keeping the sea for months without being relieved, and exposed to all kinds of weather, ought not to be considered on a par with an enemy of equal force fresh from a port, and still less in a condition to follow them, perhaps to a foreign station—to say nothing of the annoying and disheartening situation to both officers and men, that such a service naturally occasions.

The public are little alive to, because they are not much acquainted with, matters of this kind; they judge only by the result; and if they hear not of a battle and a victory, are apt to become dissatisfied, and to conclude that, as nothing of the kind has taken place, blame must rest somewhere, and where can it be more appropriately fixed than on the shoulders of the commander-in-chief? The mercantile interests are satisfied so long as their commerce is protected: when the enemy is blocked up in their harbours, and the convoys, stored with valuable cargoes, are conducted

safely into the ports of the United Kingdom, no complaint is heard from them; but the public at large, in time of war, require a stimulus of another kind. They pay, by the war taxes necessarily imposed, the expense of keeping up the required armaments, and they look for remuneration in the destruction of the enemy, and are exceedingly impatient at any delay in bringing about such a catastrophe.

Such was the clamour that prevailed in the year 1793 among all ranks and descriptions of men. It was enough that the French fleet was known to be at sea; that it was several times seen by Lord Howe, and yet no captures were made, no battle had been fought; and one reason assigned was, that the fleet was constantly coming into Torbay, instead of keeping the sea. The public prints of the day, ignorant altogether of the policy of the conduct pursued by Earl Howe, and equally so of the object of it, were exceedingly and offensively scurrilous against the British admiral, sometimes gravely or ridiculously critical, at other times sarcastic. But Lord Howe was not a man to pay much regard to attacks of this kind. His great object was to save the wear and tear of his ships, to keep them well provisioned, and to preserve the health and good humour of the men, while the practice of moving about improved their seamanship, and the discipline of the fleet. He pursued steadily the line of conduct which he deemed most conducive to the end proposed, and the government were too fully experienced in his former ser-

vices, and the high character he maintained in the navy, as the most accomplished commander of the day, to refuse him their entire confidence. As to the rest, his Lordship might very well content himself with the maxim of Swift, that "censure is a tax which a man pays to the public for being eminent."

Among the sneers and squibs of the day, the following epigram was handed about as something clever, though not very remarkable either for its point or versification :—

Cum Cæsar Romæ Gallos devicerat hostes,
Verba tria enarrant fortia facta ducis.
Howe sua nunc brevius verbo complectitur uno,
Et "vidi" nobis omnia gesta refert.

When Cæsar had the Roman foe subdued,
He told in three short words the deed was done;
Howe, with more silent modesty endued,
Relates concisely what he "saw" in one.

But the laurels which adorned the brows of the veteran hero, planted there in his more youthful days, were too deeply rooted to be hastily torn away by the rude or wanton hands of ignorant scribblers. Mr. Pitt,—without whom Lord Chatham took no important step in his office of Admiralty,—a statesman not easily born down by clamour, would not listen for a moment to Howe's retirement from the service, when he pleaded his infirmities and advancing age. The sequel of his command of the Channel fleet proved how little the public outcry was justified by such ignorant attacks on his character, and also how well Mr. Pitt knew to appreciate it.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VICTORY OF FIRST OF JUNE.

List of the Channel fleet under Lord Howe—Engages Bowen as master—Sails—Takes and destroys several prizes—Extract of Lord Howe's private journal from the 28th of May to the 1st of June, both inclusive—Arrival of the fleet with the captured ships—Return of killed, wounded, and prisoners—Second Gazette account of officers who distinguished themselves—Offence taken by those not mentioned—not intended by Lord Howe to be made public—Captain Molloy asks for a court-martial—Dismissed from command of the Cæsar—Collingwood's name omitted—Brought forward after Sir John Jervis' action off Cape St. Vincent—His "spiteful satisfaction" in making an unfavourable comparison between this action and that of 1st of June—Howe's estimate of Jervis' action—Howe's correspondence with Lord Chatham respecting the publication of officers' names—His unwillingness to consent to it, and reasons why—Lord St. Vincent's suppression of Nelson's name—The question of the enemy's disabled ships being suffered to escape—Opinions of flag-officers now living—The King's visit to Portsmouth—Promotions, honours, &c.—Lord Howe receives the thanks of both Houses of Parliament—The King's letter to Mrs. Howe and her reply—Various anecdotes respecting the battle of 1st of June—the Marlborough, Brunswick, Audacious, Defence, &c.—Lady Mary Howe's letter to her sister Lady Altamont.

It was not before the middle of April 1794, that the ships composing the Channel fleet had received the requisite repairs, and had assembled at St. Helens. This fleet now consisted of thirty-two sail of the line, of which six, besides four frigates, were placed under

the orders of Rear-Admiral Montague to attend the several outward-bound convoys, and East India Company's ships; leaving twenty-two sail of the line and six frigates under the immediate command of Lord Howe; and to these were attached the two admirals, Sir Alexander Hood and Graves, and the four rear-admirals, Pasley, Caldwell, Bowyer, and Gardner.

As one of the officers in the fleet we may here introduce a very important personage, Mr. James Bowen, the master of the Queen Charlotte. In a letter to Lord Chatham, Lord Howe says, "Though I don't know that the letter I now trouble you with is at all necessary respecting the purpose for which it is written, yet as it regards the interests of a very deserving officer, who is apprehensive of being a sufferer in consequence of his readiness to leave a quiet and profitable, to engage in a laborious and active, station in the fleet; I trust that no other apology will be requisite to justify the mention of the circumstance at this time. Mr. Bowen, the master of this ship, whose merits I believe have been noticed to your Lordship by the Comptroller, was employed by the Navy Board, as their agent in the army transport business, an office deemed both advantageous and permanent, and in the discharge of which he gave the greatest satisfaction.

"Upon my being nominated to the command of the Channel fleet, he made an offer of his services for the important station he now occupies in the fleet; in the hope he would not be deemed thereby to for-

feit his pretensions to be reinstated in his civil employment, when his continuance with the fleet becomes no longer needful." And he adds, "If there be any obstacle to this, I must forego the advantage I derive from his peculiar knowledge of the Channel navigation, and other services in the fleet, and part with him that he may not lose the durable advantage of the employment he covets to retain." Bowen, as will be seen hereafter, had the good fortune to render his return to the transport service quite unnecessary.

On the 2nd of May the fleet (enumerated in the next page) and convoys put to sea; and on the 4th Lord Howe, having advanced with the several convoys as far as the Lizard, and the wind being favourable for their further passage into the sea, detached Rear-Admiral Montague, with the following six ships of the line (the Hector, Arrogant, Theseus, Ganges, Bellona, Alexander) and four frigates (Pallas, Hebe, Venus, Circe), to attend the convoys into the parallel of Cape Finisterre, under secret instructions. The remainder of the fleet then proceeded for Ushant. In the evening of the same day three frigates were discovered outside the western entrance into Brest. The Latona and the Phaëton frigates, supported by the Orion, had been sent in the morning into the western passage, and reported that "one ship of the line, with two frigates and two brigs, were discovered at anchor in Camaret Bay; and twenty-two large ships, supposed to be of the line, were clearly seen within the

A List of the Ships and their Commanders, together with the Flag-Officers composing the Channel Fleet under Admiral Earl Howe as Commander-in-chief, which put to sea on the 2nd of May 1794.

			Captains.	Guns.	Men.	Divisional Commanders.
VAN SQUADRON. Commander in 2nd Post.	First or Starboard Division.	1.	Cæsar	Molloy	80	730	Starboard Division of the Fleet. R. Adml. Pasley, R. of White.
		2.	Bellerophon	Hope	74	617	
		3.	Leviathan	Ld. H. Seymour Conway	74	650	
		4.	Russell	Payne	74	600	
		5.	Marlborough	Hon. G. Berkeley	74	600	
	Second or Larboard Division.	6.	Sovereign	Nicholls	100	872	Admiral Graves, Ad. of White.
		7.	Audacious	Parker	74	600	
		8.	Defence	Gambier	74	600	
		9.	Impregnable	Westcot	90	767	R. Ad. Caldwell, V. of White.
		10.	Tremendous	Pigot	74	600	
CENTRE. Commander-in-chief.	First or Starboard Division.	11.	Invincible	Hon. T. Pakenham	74	600	
		12.	Barfleur	Collingwood	90	767	R. Adl. Bowyer, V. of Red.
		13.	Arrogant	Whitshed	74	600	
		14.	Culloden	Schomberg	74	600	
		15.	Theseus	Calder	74	600	
		16.	Gibraltar	Mackenzie	80	650	
		xvii.	The Charlotte	Sir R. Curtis / Sir A. Douglas	100	900	Comdr.-in-Chief.
	Second or Larboard Division.	18.	Brunswick	John Hervey	74	650	Larboard Division of the Fleet. R. Adl. Gardner, V. of Blue.
		19.	Valiant	Pringle	74	650	
		20.	Orion	Duckworth	74	600	
		21.	Queen	Nott	90	767	
		22.	Ganges	Trescott	74	600	
REAR SQUADRON. Commander in 3rd Post.	First or Starboard Division.	23.	Ramillies	H. Harvey	74	600	
		24.	Bellona	Wilson	74	600	
		25.	Alfred	Bazeley	74	600	
		26.	Royal George	Domett	100	872	Adl. Sir A. Hood, K.B.
		27.	Montagu	Montagu	74	600	
	Second or Larboard Division.	28.	Majestic	Cotton	74	600	
		29.	Glory	Elphinstone	90	750	
		30.	Hector	Halsted	74	617	R. Ad. Montague.
		31.	Alexander	Bligh	74	600	
		32.	Thunderer	Bertie	74	600	

FRIGATES, &c.

Latona.....Captain Thornborough.
Niger (repeating van).....Captain the Hon. A. K. Legge.
Venus.....Captain Brown.
Hebe.....Captain A. Hood.
Pallas.....
Aquilon (repeating rear).....Captain the Hon. R. Stopford.
Phaeton.....Captain Bentinck.
Southampton.....Captain the Hon. R. Forbes.
Pegasus (repeating centre).....Captain Barlow.

Circe. Comet, Tr. ship. Charon, H. S.

Goulet, with a considerable number of smaller vessels." The fleet continued cruizing in foggy and blowing weather, keeping nearly in the parallel of Ushant, and to the southward of it, to look out for the expected French convoy from America; and on the 19th, being close in with Ushant, the admiral ordered the Latona and Phaëton, covered by the Leviathan and Cæsar, into the Trone passage to look into Brest, when it was discovered that the enemy's fleet had put to sea; and by an American vessel just out of Brest, it was reported to Lord Hugh Seymour that they had sailed on the 17th, consisting of twenty-four ships of the line and ten frigates; their intention being to give protection to their immensely large and valuable homeward-bound convoy from North America and the West Indies.

On the 25th, after a fruitless search for the enemy, two French corvettes were observed steering after the fleet, on the supposition, as afterwards appeared, that it was their own. They were both taken; the Républicain, 18 guns and 120 men, and the Inconnu, 12 guns and 136 men, both from Brest, and in search of their own fleet. These and several other prizes and re-captures were ordered by Lord Howe to be destroyed, as no arrangement could be made at the time for sending them into any port, without diminishing the efficiency of his fleet with regard to frigates. The admiral then stood under easy sail to the northward, conformably

with the inference deduced from the latest intelligence of the probable situation of the enemy's fleet, whose principal station was supposed to be somewhere between the parallels of 45° and 47° 30′. On the morning of the 28th May, several French ships were discovered by the advanced frigates very far distant in the south-east, the wind then blowing fresh from the south by west, with a rough sea.

As we are now approaching the most splendid and important service of the many which the noble Earl had accomplished, in the course of a long and successful career, and as the Gazette accounts of the battle about to be noticed, and indeed of most battles, whether naval or military, are but brief sketches of occurrences; and moreover as naval men, on the present occasion, may not be displeased to have the whole transactions of the three days, the 28th and 29th of May and the 1st of June, before them, as they are recorded by the commander-in-chief in his private journal, written with his own hand, it has been deemed proper and fitting to give so valuable a document a place in this memoir of his life entire, without addition or alteration. Of the engagement itself little in addition need be said, after the minute and circumstantial detail entered into by Mr. James, the indefatigable and accurate historian of naval actions.

"*May 28th.* They (the enemy's fleet) were some hours before they had formed their line on the larboard tack, which they proceeded to do, while at

three or four leagues distant: the British fleet keeping in the order of sailing, with the advanced squadron under Rear-Admiral Pasley on the weather quarter of the body of the fleet, the whole under as much sail as the weather would safely admit, standing to the eastward by the wind. At eleven in the morning tacked to approach nearer to the enemy, the centre of their fleet then in the south-south-west. At four in the evening tacked back to the eastward. Soon after five o'clock the Bellerophon arriving up abreast of the rear ship of the enemy, the Revolutionaire of three decks, though too far distant to leeward for close action, began to fire upon her, and received the fire from that ship and some others ahead of her. But observing that the other ships of the advanced squadron, the Russell, Marlborough, and Thunderer, though gained more to windward of the enemy, had shortened sail, and the two last backed their main-top-sails, and firing at the enemy, from a distance far too considerable, their particular signals were made (No. 29) to attack the enemy's rear; and soon after the general signal to the same effect. The Bellerophon having her main-top-sail lowered and aback, and making the signal to denote that her main-top-mast was disabled, the other ships also of the advanced squadron still keeping astern with little sail set, and firing far distant, the general signal was made (No. 12) for assisting ships in action; and a few minutes after (about 7^{h} 25') the particular sig-

nals for the Russell and Marlborough for the same purpose; enforcing it with a gun to obtain the notice which was not duly shown to the former signals. The three aforementioned ships thereupon made sail to the eastward, the Marlborough being observed to have set her courses; and the Leviathan, pressing forward, commenced action with the rear ship of the enemy, to the relief of the Bellerophon. As the day was closing in, the Audacious was seen to advance to the attack of the Revolutionaire, in apparent very close action.

"The body of the enemy's fleet keeping on in order of battle, and being approached to about three miles distant from them, their force consisting of twenty-six ships of the line, besides frigates, it was judged requisite to form the British fleet in such order of battle ahead, as the ships, by their accidental situation at the time, could be so arranged ahead and astern of the Charlotte, to be in suitable disposition for any service which might occur in the night; nothing more of the action being distinguishable, and the firing ceasing in the rear soon after dark. Information was given by the Marlborough and Niger that the sternmost ship of the enemy was beaten out of the line by, and supposed to have struck to, the Audacious.

"*May 29th.* Frigates having been appointed to watch the enemy's motions during the night, the two fleets were much in the same relative situation at the

opening of this day; and another ship of the line, making their number twenty-six, was seen to join the enemy's fleet in the morning. The Audacious not being present, it was concluded that she had parted in attendance on the Revolutionaire.

"The wind continued still very fresh in the south-south-west, with a considerable degree of head-sea from the southward. The fleet, being far enough advanced soon after daybreak, was put upon the larboard tack, in the prospect of being able to pass near enough for some good effect on the enemy's rear; and some random shot were fired on either part, as the van ships passed astern of the enemy. The French wore thereupon in their van, in succession, and coming away large in the same manner about ten o'clock hauled to the wind, in the same succession, and opened their fire on the Cæsar, Queen, Russell, and other the headmost ships of the fleet, though at a considerable distance; the purpose of the enemy therein being, obviously, to direct an accumulated fire upon, and to disable, the van of the fleet exclusively. The *centre* of the British fleet drawing fast up with the van, the signal was *repeatedly* made for the Cæsar leading the line, and then under *treble-reefed top-sails and fore-sail*, to make more sail. In letting the third reef out, her main-top-sail split, and it became necessary to bend another. But as she did not set her main-sail, as far as it could be observed, the centre and rear of the fleet, in the order

of battle then subsisting, were obliged to shorten sail; and the Charlotte dropped to leeward for want of sufficient head-way. The Leviathan was obliged to bring-to for a short time for the same reason.

"The enemy continuing their former movement of edging down to random shot distance from the fleet, and then hauling their wind and firing as they drew ahead, it became indispensably necessary to disengage the van from such prejudicial fire; and it was deemed proper to tack the fleet in succession on the then apparent opportunity of fetching through some part of the enemy's line, to windward. The signals were made about noon for these purposes, and repeated as it became requisite for due notice thereof, at intervals of intermission of the exchanged fire from the van of the two fleets, for passing through the enemy's line accordingly.

"Soon after one, it was observed that the Cæsar was about on the starboard tack; and the Queen, Orion, and Invincible, were come to that tack also, after her. But seeing the Cæsar coming away from the wind on a parallel with the centre and rear of the fleet, under *treble-reefed top-sails and fore-sail* only, instead of keeping the wind; and that the Queen, when arrived on the beam of the Charlotte, by the wind as it seemed, with intention to push through the enemy's line, in which she could be most speedily supported by such movement, the Charlotte (the tenth ship from the van of the fleet) was immediately

tacked, and the main-sail being then set, she passed through with a continued fire on each side, while crossing the enemy's ships, between the fifth and sixth ships of the enemy's rear. When through the line, she was put on the former tack for assuming a suitable position to renew the action from to windward. But having been followed only by the Bellerophon, her second astern as the line had been on that occasion formed, though soon after joined by the Leviathan, which passed ahead of the two or three last ships (which had been considerably damaged in their masts and rigging the preceding day), no advantage could be immediately taken from this change of position. The rest of the fleet had passed with the Cæsar, along the enemy's line; and tacking astern thereof, were too far distant when they had regained the Charlotte's wake, for giving her any early support. The enemy, while the fleet were under these circumstances, wore in succession as before, for giving protection to three much disabled ships in the rear, and succeeded therein: the distant and dispersed state of the British fleet not admitting of any adequate steps to be taken for preventing them in that object.

"The ships of the fleet (called up by different signals, and finally appointed to form in line, ahead and astern of the Charlotte as most convenient,) came forward to meet the Queen Charlotte, which had stood towards them, as the enemy approached. When

arrived, they came up so crowded together, as afforded an opportunity for the enemy to have fired upon them with great advantage. But, having covered their disabled ships, and giving a distant fire as they passed to leeward of the fleet, they wore again to the westward; and the fleet preserving the weather gage, kept on after them upon the larboard tack.

"Most of the time the Charlotte was engaged, a considerable quantity of water was taken in at the lower-deck ports; and the pumps at work constantly.

"*May* 30*th* and 31*st*. The weather during these two days was mostly very foggy; the wind moderate, in the south-west quarter, and the head-sea abated: the fleet standing always on the larboard tack, and some parts of the enemy's line seen at times to the north-west. Soon after noon of the 31st, the fog clearing off, the enemy (still consisting of twenty-six sail of the line, some having separated, and others been added in the intermediate time) were seen to leeward; but having been dispersed in the fog, were forming again in order of battle, as the fleet advanced to get up abreast of them. But before that could be effected, the day was too far advanced for bringing them properly to action. It was therefore judged expedient to keep the wind, with frigates of observation to notify any change in the enemy's motions during the ensuing night.

"*June* 1*st*. The enemy was discovered this morning about three or four miles to leeward in order

of battle, under an easy sail, to the westward. The fleet being duly arranged in the same order on the larboard line of bearing, and notice given of the intention to pass through the enemy's line for engaging them to leeward, at about thirty minutes after eight, A.M., the signal (36) was made for each ship to steer for and engage her opponent in the enemy's line; whereupon the fleet bore up accordingly. The action commenced on the part of the British fleet soon after nine. The Defence, Marlborough, and Royal George, Queen, and Brunswick, being the only ships which pushed through the enemy's line, together with the Charlotte, for engaging them to leeward. The Gibraltar omitted to cross the French admiral for engaging his second ahead, as his station required. The Cæsar's main-top-sail was backed, and whilst distant from the enemy, though the signal for closer engagement was abroad.

"Soon after ten A.M., the French admiral, engaged by the Charlotte, drawing ahead (as he had continued to do from the beginning of the action, though the main-sail, top-gallant-sails, &c., were set in the Charlotte for keeping him on the same bearing when standing down to fetch under his stern), he bore away to the northward. The fore-top-mast, and soon after the main-top-mast (of which the weather-leech of the sail had been some time before cut in two and the sail rendered useless), in the

Charlotte going over the side, no hinderance of the movement, or pursuit of the French admiral could be made. But he hauled to the wind again on the larboard tack, about three miles to leeward, and formed with eleven or twelve more of his ships not disabled by the loss (at least) of any of their masts. Ten of the enemy's ships, almost all of them totally dismasted, were left to windward; but three of them with their sprit-sails, or sails raised on the stump of the fore-mast, joined the French admiral; the ships of the fleet being either so much dispersed, or disabled in their masts and rigging in the different actions, as to be prevented from opposing the escape of those French ships, or of assembling in force to renew the engagement. And when those three ships had joined the others, the enemy stood away large to the northward; leaving seven of their dismasted ships in our possession, one of which sunk while the prisoners were removing, and many of the crew perished with the ship.

"The Marlborough and Defence were totally dismasted; and the Brunswick, having lost her mizen-mast, and drifted thereby to leeward of the enemy's re-assembled ships, she bore up and arrived a few days after at Spithead.

"The damage in the masts and rigging of the ships generally was so considerable, that the 2nd and 3rd of the month were employed in securing what

were left of the wounded masts; fixing jury-masts where requisite, and removing the prisoners, as well taking the six prizes in tow.

"Having an uninterrupted succession of fair weather, with light western breezes in the intermediate time, the fleet arriving in the Channel on the 11th, a part of it under the direction of Admiral Graves was ordered to Plymouth for being refitted; and the rest, with the Charlotte, anchored the 13th instant at Spithead."

It was a novel sight at Portsmouth, such as had not been witnessed for many years, to see a triumphant fleet arrive with six of the enemy's line-of-battle ships in tow; and crowds of people from every part of the country, far and near, flocked down to witness this gratifying scene, and to hail the veteran hero on the brilliant exploit he had just achieved. The prizes brought in were

Le Juste .	. 80 guns.	L'Achille .	. 74 guns.
Sans Pareil.	. 80	Le Northumberland	. 74
L'America .	. 74	L'Impetueux .	. 74

And the Vengeur, 74, sunk immediately on taking possession of her. Such a victory, however, was not to be accomplished without a considerable loss of human life, and human suffering. The details of these, in each ship, have been published in the Gazette; it will be enough here to say that the number of killed in the British fleet was 279; of wounded, 877; making a total of 1156; among whom was

Captain Montagu of the Montagu, killed; and Captain Hutt of the Queen, and Captain J. Hervey of the Brunswick, died of their wounds. Three lieutenants of the navy, one captain and one lieutenant of the army, three masters, seven master's-mates and midshipmen, were killed. Among the wounded were Rear-Admiral Pasley (Bellerophon). Rear-Admiral Bowyer (Barfleur), each of whom had a leg shot off, and Admiral Graves (Sovereign) was badly wounded in the arm. Captain the Honorable George Berkeley (Marlborough), and Captain Sir A. S. Douglas (second captain of Queen Charlotte), one master, two captains and one lieutenant of marines, ten lieutenants of the navy, two of whom died, and eighteen midshipmen, were severely wounded.

In the six captured ships the killed were 690, wounded, 580; total, 1270; besides 320 who went down in the Vengeur. The number of prisoners removed is stated at 2300; the total number in the six captured ships could not be less than 5000.

In the Extraordinary Gazette of the 21st June, Lord Howe observes, (what all must be aware of,) that the commander of a fleet is unavoidably so confined in his view of the occurrences in time of battle, as to be little capable of rendering personal testimony to the meritorious services of officers who have profited, in a greater extent, by the opportunities to distinguish themselves on such occasions; and his Lordship therefore considered it a part of his public

duty to call upon the several flag-officers of the fleet to make their reports on the conduct of those under their respective commands; and he adds, as the general result of such a call, "Those officers, therefore, who have such particular claim to my attention are, the Admirals Graves and Sir Alexander Hood; the Rear-Admirals Bowyer, Gardner, and Pasley; the Captains Lord Hugh Seymour, Pakenham, Berkeley, Gambier, John Harvey, Payne, Parker, Henry Harvey, Pringle, Duckworth, and Elphinstone. Special notice is also due of the Captains Nicholls of the Sovereign, and Hope of the Bellerophon, who became charged with, and well conducted, those ships when the wounded flag-officers, under whom they respectively served therein, were no longer able to remain at their posts; and the Lieutenants Monckton of the Marlborough, and Donelly of the Montagu, in similar situations. These selections, however," he adds, "should not be construed to the disadvantage of other commanders, who may have been equally deserving of the approbation of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, although I am not enabled to make a particular statement of their merits."

This saving clause, nevertheless, was but little calculated to soothe the wounded feelings of the other thirteen captains whose names did not appear; and the measure of calling for these reports was considered by them and their friends as unprecedented and unjust. The *call* could scarcely be unprece-

dented, as it is a positive instruction, sanctioned by the King's Order in Council, that "every flag-officer, when in battle, is to observe the conduct of every ship near him, whether of the division or squadron he commands or not; and he is, at the end of the battle, to report his observations to the commander-in-chief, that the conduct of every officer may be represented as he shall really deserve." This information is intended solely for the Admiralty and the commander-in-chief, to enable him and them on future occasions to select those most worthy of employment, and not with any view to make it public; Lord Howe had no such intention; he was compelled, contrary to his own judgment, as will be seen, to this latter step. But if any injustice was done, it ought not to be laid to the charge of the commander-in-chief, but to the several flag-officers who made their reports. As Sir Roger Curtis, the first captain, and Sir Andrew Douglas, the second, of the Queen Charlotte, are mentioned with distinction, in the first Gazette of 10th June, Lord Howe contents himself in the second, of 11th June, by giving his own testimony in behalf generally of the officers and company of every description in that ship.

The Cæsar being repeatedly mentioned by name in an unfavourable light, her Captain, Molloy, demanded a court-martial on his conduct, which, of course, the Admiralty could not refuse; but Lord

Howe was very much annoyed at it, and did all he could to prevail on the captain not to persist in his demand, but he was inflexible. The trial was long delayed to get the witnesses assembled: it lasted many days, and the charges were proved against Captain Molloy, the sentence being, "As it appears to the court that in the actions of the 29th May and 1st June, as well as on many former occasions, his personal courage was unimpeachable, it doth adjudge him only to be dismissed from the command of His Majesty's Ship Cæsar."

It has been left on record, privately, by a gallant admiral now deceased, that Molloy was by no means the only captain that ought to have been tried for misconduct and disobedience of orders on this memorable occasion. The commander-in-chief's orders were undoubtedly not carried into effect, by a very large portion of his fleet, as to passing through the line and each engaging his opponent to leeward, but this did not appear to have arisen from any wilful disobedience, but from inability in some, on account of the bad sailing of the ships, and in others from the very compact line in which the French were formed; so that five captains only of the British fleet had the nerve to let their ships "make their own way," like the Charlotte, through the line: others again erred by mistake of signals, which may very often happen in the midst of the smoke and confusion that must occur in an engagement between two fleets. There was besides a signal which left to each com-

mander a discretionary power to engage his opponent either to windward or leeward, as circumstances might arise.

One omission of a name has recently been brought forward as a grievance, in a somewhat prominent manner, long after the death of the officer aggrieved.* It is that of the late Lord Collingwood, who was Captain of the Barfleur, in which the flag of Rear-Admiral Bowyer was flying, and who was wounded and left the deck a little after ten o'clock on the morning of the 1st of June. In consequence of this, Captain Collingwood had to draw up and sign his own report which, in point of fact, contains little more than a memorandum of the signals made from the Queen Charlotte to the several ships, and bears more the character of a log than any account of the share of the battle taken by the Barfleur. "We found it," he says, "impracticable to pass to leeward of the enemy's line, without interrupting the fire of the ships ahead of us, and in danger of being fired into by them;" and he concludes his meagre report, by paying a compliment to his officers and ship's company "for their intrepid bravery which characterize Englishmen, and the exact order observed by them." Whether it was in consequence of this report, or owing to some oversight, which is more probable, that Collingwood's name was not noticed, does not appear; but this gallant officer had undoubtedly great cause of complaint, his admiral being wounded and

* In the publication of Mr. Newnham Collingwood.

carried below in about an hour after the commencement of the battle, and the command having devolved solely on him; this, however, would appear to be the only ground on which his claim rested, for the Barfleur was by no means particularly distinguished. She had 34 men killed and wounded—the Royal George had 92—nearly three times as many—and yet the name of Sir Alexander Hood's captain, Domett, as brave a man as any in the navy, was omitted. Collingwood succeeded, however, a few years afterwards in obtaining the medal for this victory. After the gallant action of Sir John Jervis, off Cape St. Vincent, he was told by the admiral that he was set down for one of the medals to be distributed on that occasion; his answer was, he could not accept of one while that for the 1st of June was withheld. "I feel," said he, "that I was then improperly passed over, and to receive such a distinction now would be to acknowledge the propriety of that injustice." Soon after this, the *two* medals were transmitted to Collingwood at the same time by Lord Spencer, with a civil apology for some delay in sending that for the 1st of June.

This may have been right and proper, on the part of Lord Spencer; but Captain Collingwood, in praising the battle of Cape St. Vincent as "perhaps the most brilliant action upon record," might have spared the following observation—"and I cannot help feeling an almost spiteful satisfaction that Lord Howe is

outdone."* The observation is only that of an angry man, and is worth nothing more. "His 1st of June," he says, "grand as it was, bears no proportion, in any respect, to this. There, the number of ships was nearly equal; here, the enemy were nearly double; there, they had only two 3-deckers, and we had eight or nine; here, the enemy had six 3-deckers, and one of 4-decks, while we had only two first-rates and four 90-gun ships, and of our fifteen ships one was a little 64, the Diadem." Captain Collingwood, when penning this comparison, knew very well that the Spanish naval officers were infinitely inferior, in every respect, to those who commanded in the French fleet under Admiral Villaret Joyeuse, who behaved most gallantly. In describing Jervis's action, Mr. Southey says, "The general incapacity of the naval officers of Spain was so well known that, in a pasquinade which about this time appeared at Madrid, wherein the different orders of the state were advertised for sale, the greater part of the sea officers, with all their equipments, were offered as a gift; and it was added, that any person who would please to take them, should receive a handsome gratuity." But Captain Collingwood's "spiteful satisfaction" makes him forget himself. In the battle of the 1st of June, the English had *seven* 3-deckers, and the French *three*—on the 29th of May, *four*. He forgets, also, that the tonnage of the French 3-deckers was from four to five hundred tons more than ours; that of their

80-gun ships, three hundred tons more than our 98's, and their 74's at least two hundred tons larger than ours; and their dimensions, as to length and breadth, larger in the same proportion; that the Queen Charlotte had 900 men, the Royal Sovereign 875, and our 74's generally 600; whereas the Montagne had 1100 men, the Revolutionaire 1000 men, and the 74's, 700 men; the weight of their metal proportionably heavier.*

Sir John Jervis's Gazette account of this action of the 14th of February is very far from being clear; on the contrary, it leaves a doubt as to the position of the separated part of the Spanish fleet he engaged. He says, "passing through their fleet in a line formed with the utmost celerity, tacked, and thereby separated one-third from the main body, after a partial cannonade, which prevented their re-junction till the evening." From this passage, it is left doubtful whether *one-third* only of the Spanish ships were engaged, namely, nine opposed to our fifteen, or whether the other eighteen are meant. Lord Howe, in one

	British.	French.
* Number of guns	2,098	2,158
Weight of metal . . .	21,519lbs.	25,521lbs.
Number of men	16,647	19,828
Size in tons	45,338	51,520

"These odds," says Mr. James, "are on the side that an Englishman would wish them to be; they are just sufficient to shed a lustre upon the victory which his countrymen gained; and gained too over an enemy who fought most heroically, and who yielded at last, not to the superior courage, but to the superior skill and steadiness, of British seamen."

of his letters on this subject, understands it in the former sense. After paying the highest compliments to Jervis, he says, in allusion to the *partial cannonade which prevented their re-junction till the evening*, "I conceive the admiral had been so happy as to be able to confine his attack to the *third* part of the enemy's fleet he had cut off, and to act upon them with his whole force. But I don't comprehend the meaning of the passage where it is said, 'the partial cannonade which prevented their re-junction till the evening,' unless it be that the main body of the enemy, to leeward of the separated part and our fleet, never attempted moving up to the assistance of the divided ships; and when such of these last as were not captured had run down and rejoined their very negligent friends, with whom they unanimously pushed in concert for the nearest port—the devil take the hindmost."

In another letter from Bath, dated March 1797, he says, "I think it will be most unfortunate for future naval commanders, and the country also, if the opinion prevails that its fleets may successfully contend against a superiority equal to the difference between the two squadrons in the late action off Cape St. Vincent. If Jervis had been more explicit in his narrative, as I understand it, he would be sure of engaging the applause which has constituted the pre-eminence of the most devoted generals: I mean in the advantage he so ably took of his opponent's

incapacity, by the entire defeat of one part of so much superior a force, before the other could be brought forward to prevent it. Whether we shall ever be more satisfactorily acquainted with the particulars seems improbable, unless some of the subordinate commanders, dissatisfied with the omission to record their distinguished exertions, shall see fit to give a more circumstantial detail of the incidents; and by a more pointed reference to the 're-junction of the main body of the enemy in the evening,' (as the dispatch recites, and which appears to have terminated the action,) impress the conclusion, that a part only of the enemy's force was concerned therein." Subsequently, however, with that candour which never forsook him, he says, "I perceive I had misjudged, in my inference from the contents of Jervis's public letter. I now fully comprehend that the admiral's conduct was most masterly and complete; that of the Spaniards most unaccountably defective, both in plan and execution."

But should this not be the correct view, and should it even have happened that the ships engaged were equal numbers on both sides, it would still be a question whether "Lord Howe was outdone." In a letter from a gallant admiral, who was in the battle of the 1st of June, and now living, it is justly observed,—"The 1st of June was the *first* general action fought in the course of the war, and led to many glorious results; had it been the *last*, not one

of the French ships would have been allowed to return to port;"—alluding to the inexperience of many of the captains and the rawness of the crews, some of the former of whom, in particular, completely defeated the intention of the commander-in-chief—the most simple and intelligible that could be given—that each ship should pass through the enemy's line, and each engage his opponent to leeward. The subsequent signal, that "each ship should steer for and engage the ship opposed to her in the enemy's line," relieved the commanders from the difficulty and danger of passing through the enemy's compact line, but enforced the order for each ship to engage her opponent.

Lord Howe, who never complains, must nevertheless have felt this defection of so many of his officers strongly. In the year 1799, not many months before his death, on hearing of the splendid victory of the Battle of the Nile, he writes thus:—"I will only say, on the splendid achievements of Nelson, that one of the most remarkable features in the transaction consists in the eminently distinguished conduct of *each* of the captains of the squadron. Perhaps it never before happened that *every* captain had equal opportunity to distinguish himself in the same manner, or took equal advantage of it."

It has been said that, if Lord Nelson had been in the place of Lord Howe on the 1st of June, the probability is that not a ship of the French would have

escaped—granted; and if Lord Howe had been fortunate enough to have had Nelson's captains and crews, which gained the battle of the Nile, the probability is equally strong that *he* would have been equally successful; for Lord Nelson only followed Lord Howe's example in assigning to every commander his opponent; but what could Lord Nelson, or any other commander, effect, if his whole plan was deranged by the bad qualities of his ships and the inexperience and incapacity of many of their commanders?

With regard to the omission of officers' names in the official dispatch, it appears from several private letters addressed to Lord Chatham, that Lord Howe had no intention to go beyond his first letter published in the Gazette of the 10th of June, in which no names appear, except those of his own two captains. But it was suggested to him that a detail of the meritorious services of individuals would be expedient and desirable to be laid before the public. It is evident, from his correspondence, that he did not think so, and that it would not be found easy to select from the returns such a statement, "particularly," as he says, "under the circumstances of my situation, and indeed my wearied mind." On the 19th of June he thus writes to Lord Chatham:—"Conscious, my Lord, that almost every advantage to be derived from our late good fortune would be dependent on the general impression made by it, and the idea of perfect harmony subsisting in the fleet, as

well as concurrent opinion of unexceptionable good conduct of every person having part in the late engagement, I wished to confine my reports to such general statement as I have given of our transactions. It was for these reasons I wished to have conversed with your Lordship on the subject of framing some more confined narrative. But I am so assailed to name those officers who had opportunity of particularly distinguishing themselves, that I shall proceed with the earliest preparation of it, though I fear it may be followed by disagreeable consequences." And he adds; "I hope to be more clear on these points when I am to meet your Lordship, desiring only to have it understood that I cannot be insensible to the flattering distinction of being thought capable of rendering public service, whilst I most sincerely lament the disappointment I have to apprehend in that desirable pursuit." Nothing can more clearly point out than this letter does, his great unwillingness to make public the invidious distinction of individual merit, of which it had been his duty to inform himself, but which was alone intended for the information of the Admiralty. He was not allowed to follow his own opinion; for on the following day (the 20th) he is called upon to hasten off the account, which was to be published in the next day's Gazette (the 21st), and where the obnoxious distinction appears. He says, "Lieutenant Bagot waits upon your Lordship with the substitute for my former letter, wherein I have endeavoured to satisfy the ex-

pectations for a more particular detail of the services the *apparently* most distinguished commanders in the fleet performed on the late occasion."

Thus we see most distinctly that, fully impressed as he was with the impropriety and the bad consequences of the step about to be taken, Lord Howe was compelled, by an authority he could not resist, and contrary to his own wish and opinion, to make public that invidious selection of names, of which those omitted had, or thought they had, reason to complain. He was called upon too, it may almost be said, to prepare it at a moment's notice. He would have acted, if left to his own judgment, as Sir John Jervis did after the battle of St. Vincent, who omitted even the name of Nelson, though he was mainly instrumental in gaining the battle. It is known, however, that in Jervis's original letter, he had given to Nelson all due praise, but was prevailed on by Sir R. Calder, the captain of the fleet, to substitute another, in which it was left out, on the ground that, as Nelson had disobeyed the signal of recall, any eulogy on his conduct would encourage other officers to do the same; while the exclusive praise of one individual would act as a discouragement of the rest. The surprise is, that a man of Lord St. Vincent's sagacity should not have detected the lurking jealousy that gave rise to such a recommendation.

As to Lord Howe himself, anxious as he frequently expresses himself to stand well with his

brother officers, his first letter published in the Gazette, and his private letter to Lord Chatham, breathe that spirit of modesty and humility which is truly characteristic. In the latter he only says, "Being very much fatigued with our last five or six days' (and I may, without impropriety, add, as many nights,) employment, I must beg you will allow me to refer you to Sir Roger Curtis for any particulars you may desire to be informed of, which are unnoticed, respecting the late operations of the fleet, in my official letter." Indeed, throughout his correspondence with Lord Chatham, as First Lord of the Admiralty, consisting, up to this period, of about fifty private letters, there is a marked respect and deference, never approaching to anything like familiarity, which, considering the intimacy necessarily subsisting between them, is corroborative of the reserved character by which the noble earl was remarkably distinguished throughout his life. In no part of this correspondence is there any difference or opinion, or any private views whatsoever.

The same cordiality and general satisfaction might have prevailed in the fleet, had the government been contented with the reply of the Admiralty to Lord Howe's official letter, which was circulated and read to the officers and crews of all the ships—stating that his lordship's letter having been laid before the King by the Earl of Chatham, the latter "has informed the Board that his Majesty was graciously pleased to express, and to command that it be sig-

nified to you, in the strongest terms, his highest approbation of your spirited and judicious conduct upon that occasion, and his highest satisfaction in the account you have given of the bravery and gallant behaviour of *all* the officers and men who were in the action with you; and that it is also his Majesty's pleasure that you should, in the manner you may judge most proper, acquaint *all* the officers and men, especially the admirals (by name), with the just sense his Majesty entertains of the zeal and courage they have so eminently exerted in his service."

There is another point on which Lord Howe's conduct has been censured in giving way, as it is said, to the advice of the captain of the fleet; this was, not to pursue the five dismasted ships which went off unmolested under their spritsails, and succeeded in joining the remainder of their fleet, then two or three miles to leeward. That Lord Howe, in the sixty-ninth year of his age—after five or six days' and nights' fatigue,—weakened in body and mind, after so much exertion and anxiety, should be content, the battle being ended, to leave the rest to one in whom, for a long series of years, he had placed, and had every reason to place, his entire confidence, might reasonably be expected, without subjecting himself to the imputation of neglect or indifference. The prevailing opinion in the fleet certainly was, that five or six of the enemy's ships were suffered to escape which might have been captured with ease. Lord Howe states, however, both

in his public letter and private journal, that the greater number of the British fleet were so much disabled, or widely separated, and under such circumstances, with respect to those ships of the enemy in a state for action, and with which the firing was still continued, that two or three even of their dismantled ships, attempting to get away under a sprit-sail singly, or smaller sail raised on the stump of the foremast, could not be detained.

A document written by Sir Roger Curtis, and purporting to be observations on the state of the ships at the close of the action, "made for Lord Chatham on my going to England with the news of the defeat of the French," is as under:—

BRITISH.

2 Totally dismasted.
6 Main, main and fore-topmasts lost.
3 Main yards, main and fore-top-gallant-masts lost.
14 Not much damaged.

25 Total.

FRENCH.

9 Capable of making an effort to protect their dismasted ships.
2 3-deckers ran off under foremast only.
1 80, nothing but lower mast standing.
2 Dismasted, ran down under spritsail, and towed away.
4 Others that went away early in the action, but too much damaged to attempt renewing action.
7 Taken, one of which sunk afterwards.
1 Sunk in action (doubtful).

26 Total.

This statement must have been drawn up in haste, as it is not quite correct. It was soon found that the

British ships in general proved to be much more damaged than was at the time imagined.

It is for seamen only to decide (in which way, however, is not material for the present purpose) whether, from the above statement, fourteen of our ships, "not much damaged," were more than equal to oppose themselves to nine of the French "capable of making an effort to protect their dismasted ships," and the four others "that went away early in the action;" or at all events, whether they were not fully equal to have *prevented* the *five* dismantled ships from escaping. The general impression at the time in the fleet was, that they could and ought to have done so. Five flag officers now alive, all of whom served in the squadron on the 1st of June as lieutenants, have not hesitated to give their written opinion that these dismasted ships ought to have been captured. One says, "I do not think there could have been a more noble sight than seeing twenty-five British line of battle ships intending to pass through the French line, consisting of twenty-six. The French rear, seeing our intention, pressed so much and so close on their van as to prevent very many of our ships passing through or taking but little part in the action; but by so doing they destroyed their own line, and made it quite impossible for them to recover. When the smoke cleared away they had left twelve sail of their dismasted ships in our possession; five got off, some under a spritsail, and others were towed out by their small ships. We

had at that time many of our line of battle ships with every mast and sail standing, which might and should have prevented the escape of those five sail of dismasted ships." Another flag officer, a vice-admiral, says, "Certainly there was much said by the officers of the fleet; and I must confess I gave my opinion freely when the signal was made to discontinue the action before we had endeavoured to secure the enemy's dismasted ships and taken possession of them; it was the prevailing opinion that this should have been done, and not have allowed them to go off under their spritsails, and towed by their frigates to the fleet to leeward. Several of our ships had not been much injured in their masts, yards, and rigging, and certainly were equal to have performed that service; but in that case I do not think the commander-in-chief would have been in a situation to pursue the enemy. It is, I assure you, painful to my feelings (as I had a very great regard and friendship for Sir Roger Curtis), but he certainly had the credit of dissuading the commander-in-chief from pursuing the enemy. I have no doubt that Sir Roger made use of an expression implying that the French might possibly turn the tables upon us." Another gallant vice-admiral very sensibly writes thus: "I served as a lieutenant under the flag of my worthy and valuable friend Lord Gardner; was with him in the two actions of the 29th of May and 1st of June, and on the 23rd of June of the following year; during that period I had ample opportunity of

observing and forming my judgment of the indefatigable zeal and exertions of the noble Earl Howe, and I have now no hesitation in declaring what my opinion was then, and which time has since fully confirmed, that not only the fate of England, but perhaps of Europe, mainly depended on the decision of that memorable and eventful day. But I think that all conjectures and opinions, after a lapse of forty years, of what might have been the probable consequences of so retrospective an event, had other measures been pursued, appears to be perfectly useless." Useless it now undoubtedly is; but as blame is repeated against the captain of the fleet in almost every account of this memorable engagement, truth requires that, as a mere matter of fact, the question should not remain undecided. The following letter addressed to the writer of this memoir by Admiral the Honourable Sir Robert Stopford, the use of whose name has been authorized, sets it at rest:—

"Harley-Street, 1st of June.

"On this day, so memorable for the victory gained by the Admiral Lord Howe, I congratulate the naval world upon the memoirs of that eminent person being placed in your hands. . . . . My earliest impressions were strong in favour of Lord Howe, and having subsequently served under his lordship's command, as Captain of the Aquilon and Phaëton, those first impressions were much strengthened and confirmed by every circumstance of his high bearing and gallant conduct. This first victory of his, in

fact, led the way to every other; and although more dashing ones, and of larger results, took place, in the course of the long war, in none was more cool determination evinced than on that morning when, after half an hour had been given for breakfast, the two lines were drawn up parallel to and in opposition of each other. We bore down (to use the phrase of an Englishman who happened to be a prisoner on board one of the French ships) as if we were calmly coming to an anchor.

"Having observed the Marlborough dismasted in the course of the action, and surrounded by the enemy's ships, I bore down and took her in tow, which bringing me very near the Queen Charlotte, I went on board for orders: the cool, collected manner in which I was received by Lord Howe, and the desire he expressed to get the ship set to rights to continue the action, showed that such was his intention; and for the purpose of exonerating Lord Howe's memory from the charges I have heard alleged against him on that occasion, for not following up his victory, I think it right to state, that when standing on the Queen Charlotte's poop, close to Lord Howe, Sir Roger Curtis came in haste, and apparent perturbation, exclaiming, 'I declare to God, my Lord, if you don't assemble the fleet, they will turn the tables upon us.' I must confess that I did not see anything to warrant such an exclamation, excepting a French ship passing under the Queen Charlotte's stern, and firing a few guns into

her." The admiral and Sir R. Curtis then retired to another part of the poop, and nothing more was done," &c. &c.

No one can entertain a doubt that the advice was given conscientiously and with the best possible intentions, though there might be an error in judgment. It is the duty of the captain of the fleet to advise and assist the commander-in-chief, and it is for him to follow or reject his advice. No man could have conducted the perilous service entrusted to his charge at the siege of Gibraltar, with more energy, zeal, and effect, than Sir Roger Curtis did, as testified by that gallant officer General Elliot, who attributes the salvation of the garrison mainly to his exertions; and none will suppose that he would intentionally be the instrument of doing any act injurious to his own character, or to that of his benefactor and friend, who took him by the hand, and never deserted him, at a time when they were perfect strangers to each other. But, after all, has not more been said on this part of the subject than it deserves, and was not the beneficial effect to the country pretty much the same whether seven or twelve of the enemy's ships had been taken? By this action the superiority of the British navy was fully confirmed; its spirit, some time dormant, was revived—that of the enemy depressed; it was to one a decided victory —to the other, as decided a defeat.

Admitting then what seems to have been the

general feeling, that the five dismantled ships *ought* not to have been suffered to escape to their fleet, the question is, was Lord Howe in a condition, with regard to his fleet, to order down a squadron to recover them, which could only be done by renewing the action? The following statement, extracted from a critical inquiry into the transactions of the three days, by a captain of the navy, who has given much attention to naval actions with fleets, may assist in clearing up this point:—"What hope," he asks, "could Lord Howe entertain of renewing the combat with advantage when the state of the following ships is taken into consideration? namely, the Queen Charlotte, Royal Sovereign, Royal George, Barfleur, Queen, and Glory, of three decks, that were at the time incapable of renewing the combat; as were also the Cæsar, of 80, and the Bellerophon, Brunswick, Orion, Russell, Invincible, Defence, and Marlborough, of 74 guns each—the two last totally dismasted. The British admiral had left only the Impregnable, 90—the Gibraltar, 80—and eight 74's, to combat one ship of 120, three of 84, and eight of 74 guns, rather less damaged than those remaining at Lord Howe's disposal—that is, ten to twelve."* He might have added, what confidence could Lord Howe have in his eight 74's which had contributed little or nothing to the victory—such as the Thun-

* Captain Thos. White, Buckfast Abbey, Devon, who has published remarks on several naval actions, but not on Lord Howe's.

derer, that had not a man killed or wounded; the Alfred, none killed, and eight wounded; the Tremendous, Culloden, Majestic, Ramillies, and Valiant, all of which had little share in the action;—was a second battle to be entrusted to such ships?

The same officer very justly observes, "That France had, during the peace, been making extraordinary efforts to build new ships, to replace those lost to the state during the American war, which ships were of an improved as well as of an enlarged construction; while those of his Britannic Majesty were, with very few exceptions, such as had figured in two or three wars previous; so that nothing but our superior seamanship made up for the inferiority of our ships. Even our best ships were of that class which the French had repudiated; and Lord Howe's fleet, bad as it was, was the most efficient our naval service could boast." It was this neglect of the fleet, and the refusal of the ministers to grant the adequate supplies to provide an efficient one, that disgusted Lord Howe when he held the office of First Lord of the Admiralty, and finally drove him from it.

Having now endeavoured to place, in their proper light, some circumstances which caused a temporary dissatisfaction in the fleet, we may turn to those of a more agreeable description.

On the 20th of June, the King, Queen, and three princesses, proceeded to Portsmouth, and took up their residence in the Commissioner's house, in the

Dockyard. Attended by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Board of Admiralty, the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, the Master-General of the Ordnance, the Port-Admiral, flag-officers and captains present, they went in procession to the Queen Charlotte, where they were received by Lord Howe; when the King, on reaching the quarter-deck, presented the gallant veteran with a sword richly set with diamonds, and also a gold chain to be worn about the neck, preparatory to a medal, intended to be struck and appended to it; and similar chains to Admiral Sir Alexander Hood, Rear-Admiral Gardner, and Sir Roger Curtis. On returning to the shore, Admiral Earl Howe in his barge, with the union flag flying, led the procession. During the four days the King remained, he visited the Dockyard and other public establishments; attended divine service at the church on the Sunday; inspected the forces and several of the ships of war; and on the 30th of June embarked on board the Aquilon, at Spithead, which conveyed the royal family to Southampton, from whence they proceeded to Windsor.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that during the royal visit nothing but feasting and rejoicing, salutes, fireworks, and illuminations prevailed in Portsmouth. His Majesty gave donations from his privy purse to the artificers, workmen, and labourers of the Dockyard, Victualling, and Ordnance departments;

to the crews of the Queen Charlotte and the Aquilon frigate; and he was also pleased to order one hundred pounds to be distributed to the poor of each of the parishes of Portsmouth and Portsea; fifty pounds to the poor of Gosport, and fifty pounds to the debtors in Portsmouth gaol; amounting, with other donations, to upwards of three thousand pounds.

On the 4th of July a promotion was made of flag-officers, including nine captains to be Rear-Admirals of the Blue, among whom was the Captain of Lord Howe's fleet; and on the same day, Wm. Young, Esq., James Gambier, Esq., and the Right Hon. Lord Hugh Seymour, were appointed colonels of his Majesty's marine forces. Admiral Graves and Sir Alexander Hood were created barons of the kingdom of Ireland, and Rear-Admirals Bowyer, Gardner, and Pasley, together with Sir Roger Curtis, baronets of the United Kingdom. Bowen's services, short as they were, received that consideration to which they were entitled. He was made lieutenant the 23rd of June 1794; commander, 29th of June 1795; captain, 2nd of September 1795; retired captain on the 4th of June 1814; a Commissioner of the Transport Board, and, in July 1825, promoted to a retired rear-admiral. Ten years after his own promotion as captain, Lord Barham raised his younger son to the same rank, having mistaken him for the elder brother, to correct which error he gave a commission to the latter also, both of

whom stand together on the list of captains of the year 1805.

His Majesty likewise, on this occasion, signified his gracious intention of bestowing on Lord Howe the Blue ribbon, when he should come up to town. His lordship, however, by letter of the 18th of July, writes from Grafton-Street as follows:—"The circumstances about the Blue ribbon would be of too long detail for a letter to convey the perfect understanding of the matter; suffice it to say, at present, that it was left at my option to maintain what I may (without arrogance) term my title to the distinction. But the notification of it, from the minister, was coupled with such suggestions, as of benefit to the King's service, by a different disposal of the ribbon, that I deemed it expedient to press that more advantageous appointment of it. The alternative of a marquisate was offered and declined." The fact was, Mr. Pitt had promised it to the Duke of Portland. His Majesty, however, took the earliest opportunity of conferring on the noble earl the Order of the Garter. The corporation of London presented him with the freedom of the city in a gold box, and he received the thanks of both houses of parliament; the more gratifying must these have been to the noble earl, as every tongue that spoke in both houses was lavish in praise, not alone of the skill and bravery which had always marked his conduct, but for his integrity, love of justice, and huma-

nity, and every private virtue by which he was distinguished. "There was not a man in that house," said Mr. Fox, "or in the country, who had given higher satisfaction in all his professional life than the noble earl had; he, therefore, never heard a motion which had more decidedly his approbation than the present."

This splendid victory was, if possible, more highly esteemed by the continental powers, who had not yet been contaminated by the principles of the French revolutionists, than at home. But perhaps the most gratifying testimony to this great piece of service was a congratulatory letter which George III. wrote to the earl's sister, Mrs. Howe, and of which the following is a copy:—

"Windsor, 11th of June 1794.

"Mrs. Howe's zeal for the great cause in which this country is engaged, added to her becoming ardour for the glory of her family, must make her feel with redoubled joy the glorious news brought by Sir Roger Curtis; she will, I hope, be satisfied now that *Earl Richard* has, with twenty-five sail of the line, attacked twenty-six of the enemy, taken six and sunk two:* besides, it is not improbable that some of the disabled ships of the enemy may not be able to reach their own shore. I own I could not refrain from expressing my sentiments on the occasion, but will not detain her by adding more.

(Signed) "GEORGE R."

* A very common error at this time.

To which gracious communication Mrs. Howe returned the following admirable reply :—

" When Mrs. Howe heard last night of the victory obtained by your Majesty's fleet, she did not feel a possibility of any addition to her felicity, but the approbation expressed by your Majesty of what has been performed, and the honour done her by so precious and so gracious a notice of it, under the hand of her adored Sovereign, has proved the contrary: and she has only to regret that a woman cannot throw herself at your Majesty's feet this morning at the levee, and there to have endeavoured to express her heartfelt gratitude."

Lord Howe had not much reason to be pleased with the Board of Admiralty, or rather perhaps the First Lord of the Admiralty, for not gratifying him in the very few requests he had to make respecting some of the inferior officers. Commanders-in-chief are naturally solicitous for those who have served under them meritoriously, but they sometimes expect too much. Howe did not, however, talk or write of his grievances, nor was he querulous like Collingwood, who was not easily satisfied. He kept on good terms with Lord Chatham, but could not bring himself to ask any favour of him. He was desirous of obtaining a larger and better frigate than the Pegasus for Captain Barlow, who had attended the Channel fleet since its first appointment to repeat signals; but fearful of a refusal, he did not venture to

ask for another. On his Majesty's visit, when Lord Chatham was present, Lord Howe, on introducing Captain Barlow, observed he was a brave officer and ought to have a larger frigate. The King, turning to the First Lord of the Admiralty, said, "My Lord Chatham, Captain Barlow must have a larger frigate." Accordingly he was appointed to succeed Sir Robert Stopford, in the Aquilon, where, he says, "I found the finest ship's company I ever commanded, and in a state of discipline which reflects the highest merit on Stopford."

After such a conflict, it may be supposed what anxieties prevailed to know the fate of relatives and friends in the respective ships, and what pleasure derived from the mutual communications relative to the transactions of the fleet, during the four days it was in presence of the enemy. If a collection could have been made of the conduct and performances of each ship, (apart from the dry reports that were given in)—of the tales of individual bravery, and of anecdotes of a grave or humorous character—they would form an amusing and instructive volume. Many have been scattered among the journals of the day, some of which may here be mentioned, together with a few that have not before appeared.

The Queen Charlotte, as in duty bound, set a most brilliant example to the rest. On the 29th of May, when she broke through the enemy's line, she was followed, in the most gallant manner, by the

Leviathan and the Bellerophon, both of which were most conspicuously engaged. The fore-mast of the Leviathan was crippled, and in danger of falling; Lord Howe, observing this, instantly stood to her rescue. The following is an extract from the Journal of Lord Hugh Seymour, obligingly furnished by his son, Sir George Seymour :—" Quarter before four: being very near, and pointing into the body of the French fleet, which had then approached to succour their rear, the Queen Charlotte wearing, we did the same, but not without exposing ourselves for a long time to be raked by the French admiral, and three other ships, which had stood back to the relief of two of their ships that were in danger of being cut off by our fleet.

" On this occasion the gallant conduct of the Queen Charlotte, in coming down to draw the enemy's fire from the Leviathan, has made too strong an impression on my mind, and is too much the subject of general applause on board her, for me to resist expressing my sense of it, and offering, in the name of all the officers, as well as my own, this feeble though grateful tribute of our admiration of our noble chief Lord Howe."

But the 1st of June was the day most glorious to the memory of Lord Howe. His breaking through the line, and brushing the ensign of Rear-Admiral Villaret Joyeuse's flag-ship on the one side, and grazing, on the other, the Jacobin's mizen shrouds

with her jib-boom, was an exploit which has not been equalled, though approached nearly by Collingwood, eleven years afterwards, in the battle of Trafalgar, when the Sovereign cut the line and breasted the stern of the Santa Anna. The Queen Charlotte would, no doubt, have either sunk or captured the Montagne had not her fore-top-mast been shot away, and just as the French admiral's fire had nearly ceased, the main-top-mast fallen over the side, which gave the Montagne the opportunity of making off to leeward, without the possibility of the Charlotte's following her. Her hull was completely damaged; the tremendous broadside poured into her stern, as the Charlotte was passing through the line, made a hole large enough, as one of the sailors said, to row the admiral's barge through it.

As the Charlotte was advancing down towards the French line, with a determination to pass through it, it appeared so close and compact that Lord Howe expressed a doubt, whether there was room to pass between the Montagne, of 120 guns, and the Jacobin, of 80, which had stretched partly under the lee of the former, as if afraid of the Charlotte's broadside, thus occupying the place it was intended the Charlotte should take. Lord Howe, however, was determined to pass through, or run on board the enemy's flag-ship or the Jacobin, on which Bowen, with that blunt and resolute tone so peculiarly his own, called out, "That 's right, my Lord, the Charlotte will make room for herself." On his

first appointment to the Queen Charlotte, this unpolished but shrewd and clever seaman was in the habit, in addressing the commander-in-chief or replying to his questions, of frequently, almost constantly, using the expression "My Lord." One day Lord Howe said to him; "Bowen, pray, my good fellow, do give over that eternal my Lord, my Lord; don't you know I am called *Black Dick* in the fleet?"—the sobriquet by which he was generally known to the sailors.

Just as the Charlotte was closing with the Montagne, Lord Howe, who was himself conning the ship, called out to Bowen to starboard the helm; to which Bowen remarked, that if they did so she would be on board the next ship, the Jacobin: to this his lordship replied, sharply, "What is that to you, Sir?" Bowen, a little nettled, said, in an under tone, "D—n my eyes, if *I* care if *you* don't; I'll go near enough to singe some of our whiskers." Lord Howe heard him, and turning to his captain, said, "That's a fine fellow, Curtis."

Some time after the battle, a deputation of the petty officers and seamen requested Bowen to ask Lord Howe if they might have the gratification of congratulating his lordship on the victory he had gained, and of thanking him for having led them so gloriously into battle. On receiving them on the quarter-deck, Lord Howe himself being on the front of the poop, was so affected that he could only say, with a faltering voice, and his eyes glistening

with tears, "No, no, I thank *you;* it is *you,* my brave lads—it is you, not I, that have conquered." The honest and blunt Bowen, in telling this to a friend, said, "I could myself have cried most heartily to see the veteran hero so affected."

Shortly after the return of the Charlotte to Portsmouth, Lord Howe sent for the first lieutenant, Larcom, whom he thus addressed:—"Mr. Larcom, your conduct in the action has been such that it is necessary you should leave this ship." Larcom, who was as brave as his admiral, a good officer and seaman, was thunderstruck, and, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed, "Good God! my Lord, what have I done? why am I to leave the ship?—I have done my duty to the utmost of my power." "Very true, Sir," said Lord Howe; "but leave this ship you must; and I have great pleasure in presenting you with this commission as commander, for your conduct on the late occasion."

It appears to have been at the particular solicitation of Sir Roger Curtis that the Cæsar was appointed to lead the van in the order of battle on the 29th of May, much against the opinion of Lord Howe. Circumstances, however, occurred on that day which induced Lord Howe to nominate another ship in her place; but he again yielded the point, on Sir Roger's earnest request to give him another trial, remarking, at the same time, "You have mistaken your man, I have not." On the 1st of June,

when the Cæsar hauled up instead of going through the enemy's line, Lord Howe, who was standing on the poop of the Queen Charlotte, tapped Sir Roger on the shoulder, and, pointing to the Cæsar, said, "Look, Curtis, there goes your friend; who is mistaken now?"

The unfavourable opinion which Lord Howe seems to have formed of Captain Molloy may have been imbibed before the sailing of the fleet. The two captains of the Cæsar and the Marlborough, when at St. Helens and ready for sea, had requested leave of absence, on which the commander-in-chief thus writes:—"Our friend Molloy seems rather unfortunate in the multiplicity of family and other concerns, in which he is so frequently engaged. If the fleet had been ordered to sea as early as there has been reason to expect, and the detention of the Indiamen been removed, his important and unexplained family concerns must have lost to him the benefit of his interposition where it would have been required. I have also a letter full of the distress which the suggestion that the Marlborough's removal to St. Helens has created, and the necessity for attention to ordnance concerns increased; and it is inferred, in consequence, that I shall control that expected appointment.* I have written in answer

* The gallant captain was actually appointed Surveyor-General of the Ordnance—rather an incompatible situation to be held by a captain in commission.

that I neither think the 'deficient of complement' nor 'requisite attention to ordnance business' of sufficient weight to bar the employment of the ships as Admiral Graves proposes for that temporary service. And I have explained my sentiments so much at large, on the plea of civil duties intervening to cramp naval requisitions as, I trust, will put an end to the urging of the former in future." It is rather curious that these two ships should have required so many signals on the 29th of May to bring them near the enemy. On the 1st of June, however, the Marlborough amply redeemed any tardiness on the former day, having been totally dismasted and her captain wounded and taken off deck. The conduct of the Marlborough on the 1st of June, as described partly by Captain Berkeley and partly by her First Lieutenant, Monckton, after the former was carried off deck wounded, is so noble, and at the same time attended with such remarkable circumstances, that it ought not to be passed over:—

"The Marlborough engaged the Impetueux for about twenty minutes, when she payed round off and dropt with his bowsprit over our quarter, where he lay exposed to a very heavy raking fire which we kept up. Every creature was driven from her decks, and some of my men boarded her, but were called back. I had now the satisfaction to see all his masts go over the side. At this moment a seventy-four, which was astern of the Impetueux, attempted to

weather and rake us; but he met with so severe a reception that he dropt on board his consort's quarter, and then luffing up, boarded the Marlborough upon the bow; but the steadiness of our troops, and the good use made of our guns and carronades, prevented him from availing himself of his situation. In a few minutes I had the pleasure of seeing this ship's masts follow the example of the other, and they both lay without firing a gun, or without any colours, which makes me suppose they had struck, as not a soul was upon deck to answer; and what confirmed me in this opinion afterwards, when we were dismasted and lay along-side the Impetueux, within half-pistol shot was, that no attempt was made against us, until our own fleet came up and took possession of them.

"I now attempted to back off from the two wrecks, and unfortunately accomplished it just as the French admiral came under our stern, who backed his maintopsail and raked us, by which he did us considerable damage, and carried away our three masts. It was from this ship I received my wound, and therefore the remainder is the account of my first lieutenant."

Lieutenant Monckton thus proceeds:—"At the time Captain Berkeley was obliged to quit the deck, we were still on board, but backing clear of our opponents; our masts being then shot away by the three-decker under our stern, carried away the ensign staff and deprived us of hoisting any colours

for a few minutes. I ordered the wreck to be cleared away from the colour chest, and spread a Union Jack at the spritsail-yard and a St. George's ensign at the stump of the foremast; but perceiving that the latter was mistaken by some of our own ships for the tri-coloured flag, I ordered the flag to be cut off. At this time we were laying along the Impetueux, within pistol-shot; and, finding that she did not return a gun, and perceiving she was on fire, I ordered our ship to cease firing at her, and suffered them quietly to extinguish the flames, which I could easily have prevented with our musketry. While clearing away the wreck, the rear of the enemy's fleet was coming up, and perceiving that they must range close to us, and being determined never to see the British flag struck, I ordered the men to lie down at their quarters to receive their fire, and to return it afterwards if possible; but being dismasted, she rolled so deep that our lower-deck ports could not be opened. The event was as I expected; the enemy's rear passed us to leeward very close, and we fairly ran the gauntlet of every ship which could get a gun to bear, but luckily without giving us any shot between wind and water, or killing any men, except two who imprudently disobeyed their officers and got up at their quarters. Two of their ships, which had tacked, now came to windward of us, and gave us their fire, upon which one of their hulks * hoisted a

* Dismasted ships that had struck.

national flag, but upon our firing some guns at her she hauled it down again; and a three-decker having tacked also, stood towards us, with a full intention, I believe, to sink us if possible: the Royal George, however, who I suppose had tacked after her, came up, and, engaging her very closely, carried away her main and mizen-masts, and saved the Marlborough from the intended close attack. I then made the signal for assistance on a boat's mast; but this was almost instantly shot away. At five the Aquilon took us in tow, and soon after we joined the fleet."

Captain Berkeley then concludes the report by stating, that "the perfect discipline and well-directed fire which the officers kept up at their quarters, could only be equalled by the coolness, obedience, and bravery of the men; and the very trying and critical juncture in which Lieutenant Monckton took the command of the ship, and kept the British flag triumphant until the victory was decided, demands my utmost praise." This brave fellow was made commander a month after the battle, and captain the following year.

A curious incident is said to have occurred on board this ship. When she was entirely dismasted, and otherwise disabled, by the extreme severity of the conflict,—the captain (the Hon. G. Berkeley), and the second-lieutenant (Sir Michael Seymour), severely wounded, the latter having his arm shot off, and the ship so roughly treated, that a whisper

of surrender was said to have been uttered, which Lieutenant Monckton overhearing, resolutely exclaimed, "he would be d—d if she should ever surrender, and that he would nail her colours to the stump of the mast." At this moment a cock, having by the wreck been liberated from the broken coop, suddenly perched himself on the stump of the mainmast, clapped his wings, and crowed aloud; in an instant three hearty cheers rang throughout the ship's company, and no more talk of surrender. At the same time the Aquilon frigate, commanded by the Hon. Sir Robert Stopford, seeing the helpless state the Marlborough was in, came to her assistance and towed her out of the line. The gallant admiral, in reply to a question about the *cock*, says, "it partakes of a cock-and-a-bull story, but there is no mistake in the cheers of the crew on my taking her in tow." It is nevertheless a true story: through the kindness of Sir Thomas Hardy, an inquiry was made among the old pensioners of the Marlborough in Greenwich hospital, and two of the most intelligent, Alexander Boswell and William Brett, fully corroborate the circumstance; and the latter states that, on the arrival of the ship at Plymouth the cock was given to Lord George Lennox, the governor, by desire of Captain Berkeley. Lady Hardy has been good enough to ascertain from her aunt, Lady Mary Lennox, that the story is perfectly true, that the cock lived to a good old age, and that while the

Marlborough remained at Plymouth it was daily visited by parties of her crew.

His Majesty's ship the Brunswick had a large figure-head of the duke, with a laced hat on. The hat was struck off by a shot in the battle. The crew of the Brunswick, thinking it a degradation that a prince of that house should continue to be uncovered in face of the enemy, sent a deputation to the quarter-deck to request that Captain Harvey would be pleased to order his servant to give them his laced cocked hat to supply the loss. The captain, with great good humour, complied, and the carpenter nailed it on the duke's head, where it remained till the battle was finished. One of the sailors of this ship, in a letter to his wife at Newton Abbot, makes the following very shrewd and sensible remark:—"This dreadful battle happened on a *Sunday*, and if the French have rejected that day out of *their* calendar, God Almighty has shewn them that he has not left it out of *his*." Nothing could exceed the gallant conduct of the Brunswick in her action with the Vengeur. One of the bower-anchors of the former being shot away, the cable ran out its whole length, and the ship in rounding fell close alongside the Vengeur. In this situation, being observed by Captain Henry Harvey, the brother of the commander of the Brunswick, who afterwards fell on that day, he stood to their relief in the Ramillies, and poured such a tremendous and destructive fire into the Ven-

geur, that just after the conclusion of the battle she went to the bottom.

The Defence, Captain Gambier, behaved most gallantly, and was terribly cut up and totally dismasted; she was one of the few that passed through the enemy's line, got into the midst of the French ships, and lost her main and mizen-masts. Captain Gambier was an excellent officer, and a gentleman of strict principles of religion and morality. At the close of the action, Captain Pakenham, a rattling, good-humoured Irishman, hailed him from the Invincible, "Well, Jimmy, I see you are pretty well mauled; but never mind, Jimmy, whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Another incident took place in the little Defence: the lieutenant of the after-part of the main-deck, seeing a three-decker, the Republicain, (which shot away her remaining mast,) suddenly bearing down towards them, struck with a kind of momentary panic, ran up to the quarter-deck, and addressing the captain with great eagerness, exclaimed, "D—n my eyes, Sir, but here is a whole mountain coming upon us; what shall we do?" Captain Gambier, unmoved, and looking gravely at him, said, in a solemn tone, "How dare you, Sir, at this awful moment, come to me with an oath in your mouth? Go down, Sir, and encourage your men to stand to their guns, like brave British seamen." On asking Captain (then Lord) Gambier, some years afterwards, if the story was

true, he replied, he believed something of the kind occurred.

When the Sans Pareil was taken possession of, Captain Troubridge was found on board as a prisoner, having been captured in the Castor, when in charge of the Newfoundland convoy. On the morning of the 1st of June, the French officers, seeing the British fleet under easy sail, going parallel to the French line, taunted him by saying "there will be no fighting to-day: your admiral will not venture down." "Wait a little," said Troubridge; "English sailors never like to fight with empty stomachs: I see the signal flying for all hands to breakfast; after which, take my word for it, they will pay you a visit." When the Sans Pareil had got enough of the battle, and was prepared to surrender, her captain sent down to request Troubridge would come upon deck and do him the honour to strike her colours: an honour which he thought fit to decline.

But one of the most gallant exploits that occurred on this memorable occasion was when the Audacious, a small 74, commanded by Captain Parker, on the evening of the 28th of May, together with the Leviathan, drove the Revolutionaire, a large three-decker, out of the line: the Audacious stuck to her during the whole night, or, as Lord Howe has it, "parted in attendance on the Revolutionaire." "The Audacious," says her captain, "commenced a very close action, which continued near two hours without in-

termission, never exceeding the distance of half a cable's length, but generally closer, and several times in the utmost difficulty to prevent falling on board, which, as his last effort, to appearance, at about ten o'clock, he attempted to effect. At this time his mizen-mast was gone by the board; his lower-yards and main-top-sail-yard shot away: he fell athwart our bows; but we separated without being entangled: he then directed his course before the wind. When the enemy separated from athwart our bows, the company of his Majesty's ship under my command gave three cheers, from the idea, taken from the people quartered forward, that his colours were struck. This I cannot myself take upon me to say, though I think it likely, from his situation obliging him to pass through or near to our line; but certain it is he was completely beaten: his fire slackened towards the latter part of the action, and the last broadside (the ships' sides almost touching each other) he sustained without returning more than the fire of two or three guns."

After laying by during the night, which Captain Parker states was very dark—"Soon after daylight," he says, "the next morning, to our utmost chagrin and astonishment, we discovered nine sail of the enemy's ships about three miles to windward." Thus was the little 74 deprived of her three-decked prize; and, in the disabled state of her rigging, was herself likely to have fallen a prey to the enemy's

fleet, had not the rain and fog coming on allowed her to make her way unobserved to Plymouth.

The writer of this Memoir, having been favoured with the following extract of a letter written at Portsmouth by Lady Mary Howe, second daughter of the noble earl, to her sister Lady Altamont, is of opinion that, from the amusing anecdotes it contains, it may with propriety be placed at the conclusion of this chapter:—

"Portsmouth, July 2, 1794.

"My dear Sister,—I have not written to you since I received your last letter, partly from want of time, and also because I have every day expected another letter from you, in answer to that which brought you the first account of our great happiness. As none is arrived, I will continue my history from where I ended in my last—I believe at the arrival of the Royal Family. The three younger Princesses and Prince Ernest arrived on Wednesday. Mamma and I dined and spent the evening with them, and saw them as happy as the general advantage and every consideration of private friendship could make them. I must say the same of the King and Queen, and the elder Princesses, who appeared almost to share our feelings. They came to the Commissioner's house, at the Dock, at ten o'clock the next morning. We had been desired to attend and receive them; and after remaining about half an hour in the house they all set out to go on board the

Queen Charlotte—mamma and I being ordered to go first on board and receive them. On their entering the ship, my father remained on deck, under his own flag. The papers will have described their coming on board in my father's barge, steered by Sir A. Douglas, and attended by the Admiralty in their barge, and all the admirals and all the captains of the fleet in their boats. They were saluted by the Queen Charlotte, and all the ships of the fleet, when the royal standard appeared in sight, and cheered by each ship as they passed. Curtis received the King, and led him immediately upon deck. Our attendance on the Queen and Princesses prevented mamma and I from seeing the first meeting of the King and my glorious father, which I am told was the most affecting thing possible. My father's knees trembled with emotion when he kissed the King's hand, who presented him with a most magnificent sword set with diamonds, and afterwards with a gold chain, to which is to be hung a gold medal struck for the occasion; which is also given to the other admirals and captains who have contributed to this victory, considered as the greatest ever obtained on the sea. My father afterwards kissed the Queen's hand; and then his flag was lowered and the royal standard raised to the main-top-mast's head, and saluted by the whole fleet. The Royal Family then went into the cabin, and appeared happy and comfortable to the highest degree, giving us a thousand proofs of

the kindest interest. About three o'clock they went to dinner; after which the King gave a toast, drank by all at the table—the Princesses, the Prince, Lady Courtown, Lady Caroline Waldegrave, Lady Frances Howard, mamma, and I, my father waiting on the King and Queen—and this toast was pronounced in the most solemn manner, 'May her great Admiral long command the Queen Charlotte, and may she long be an example to future fleets!' A short time after this, the whole Royal Family walked through the ship's company, drawn up in line, when my father told the King aloud, 'that their diligence and propriety of conduct, in all respects, since the victory, was not less commendable than their resolution and bravery during the action.' Nothing during the day was more pleasing to me than this walk through these brave fellows, every one of whom I am certain would attend my father to a cannon's mouth, and all of whom have exposed their lives for him. We then left the ship with the same ceremonies, and when we were at some distance, the Queen Charlotte began, and the whole fleet saluted. We attended the Royal Family to the stairs at the dock, and then returned home, perhaps the happiest mortals breathing.

"The next day the King held a levee at the governor's, where all the officers of the fleet were presented separately to the King and Queen, and the gold chains given to the admirals; after which the King gave a dinner to the admirals—mamma,

Lady Pitt, and I, dining with the Queen; and in the evening the Royals went on board the prizes in the harbour; but there mamma and I did not attend them. On Saturday they sailed about, and dined on board the Aquilon, which struck upon the Mother-bank, and we were obliged to come home in boats about nine o'clock, having passed a most delightful day, and with the finest weather possible. I should have said they saw the Prince of Wales launched in the morning. On Sunday they went to church at the dock, where they were attended by all the officers, and heard an admirably fine sermon, which is to be printed, and preached aboard all the ships. The King then dined with the captains of the fleet, and in the evening walked round the ramparts, the Queen and Princesses remaining with us at the governor's. On Monday they left Portsmouth; but, to complete all, went by water to Southampton in the Aquilon, and we with them. After seeing them into their carriage, we returned; when the wind, which had been quite favourable to carry them over, shifted exactly round, and brought us home in three hours, the most delightful sail down the Southampton river in boats I ever went. We got here by five, in time for a second dinner. We were to leave this place yesterday, but have been detained, to my father's severe regret, by the deaths of Captains Harvey and Hutt, who died on Sunday morning, and whose funerals he wished to attend: he is just come home from that most

melancholy ceremony. Poor Harvey was his particular friend, and had fought his Brunswick in the most heroic manner, and whose only anxiety after he came into Portsmouth was, (his arm having been taken off,) that Lord Howe should have been well satisfied with his conduct, and that he had justified the good opinion he had of him, when he gave him his Brunswick, and placed him next to himself in the line of battle. He had received two shots in the arm before he left the deck to have it amputated in consequence of a third. His poor brother, who commanded the Ramillies, seeing the Brunswick with three ships upon her at the same time, had twice borne down between the enemy and his brother to take the fire in his stead. For some time after he came on shore, it was thought he would do well, but the hot weather, and a contusion he had in his back, brought on a violent fever, of which he died the day month after the action. Poor Hutt was also an uncommon fine officer, but in a very bad state of health: the admirals who were wounded are all doing well. I have just heard that we go from hence on Saturday. On Tuesday I go to Tunbridge with Charlotte and her brats, as it is supposed the waters will do us both good, though neither are ill; but Charlotte was so much struck, when she first heard of my father's glorious victory, that it made her as yellow as saffron; and, as I have contrived lately not to look well nor be very strong, (I really believe from anxiety about

my father,) it was thought Tunbridge would do me good.

"I will now try to recollect some more particulars to entertain you. The King's present has been carried all round the fleet, to every ship's company, and shewn to the sailors by an officer, and a paper read to them, written by my dear father, to express that, as commander-in-chief, and as he considers this proof of the King's approbation in a great measure obtained by their exertions, he was desirous it should be seen by *all* those who had so much contributed to the victory. The sailors have been delighted with this attention, and the sword and declaration have been greeted with three cheers from every ship. Those on board the Queen Charlotte all touched it; and the whole fleet joined in the wish of health to him to wear it. The attachment of the sailors to him is I believe unexampled. In the fog of the 30th of May, Captain Payne told me he observed a little additional thickness on one side of the Russell, which he hailed, and it proved to be the Queen Charlotte: the ships not having had any communication since the action the day before, it was asked if all was well, and afterwards how was the admiral? The moment it was answered Lord Howe was well, all the men of the Russell burst into three cheers. I told you before of all his own sailors coming upon deck with the same ceremony to welcome him after the action. Those who were present at that scene tell me no-

thing was ever equal to it. My father says, 'Poor fellows, I was not prepared for it, and own it almost got the better of me!' What it must have been to those who saw him take off his hat to return the compliment! My father stood upon the poop the whole time of the action; and nothing but a shot carrying away his topmasts, as he attempted to pursue the 'Montagne,' prevented his taking possession of her, after having totally silenced her guns, though so much superior to the Queen Charlotte in every respect: she was 800 tons bigger. The 80-gun ships we have taken are ten feet longer than our first-rates, and some inches wider; and the whole French fleet had 470 guns more than ours, and of a much larger calibre. Our superiority, in addition to the skill of the dear commander, lay in the resolution and firmness of the common sailors, of which, amongst many others, one occurred on board the Marlborough: to this ship two of the enemy were so close, that one of the sailors said 'he would visit them on board their own ship.' As he was going to leap over, one of his comrades called after him to take a cutlass with him, which he refused, saying 'he should find one there;' and on being called back, actually returned with *two* of the enemy's cutlasses in his hands*. On board the Queen and Invincible, the

* This looks like romance, but is more than probable true, Captain Berkeley having stated that, when the bowsprit of the Impetueux was over the Marlborough's quarter, and every creature driven from her decks, some of his men boarded her, but were called back.

sailors who had their arms taken off in the engagement of the 29th, went into the cockpit on the 1st of June, to assist the surgeons and encourage the poor men who were to submit to the same operation, by declaring it was much less painful than it appeared to be, and that they felt no pain from the wounds.

"The crew of the L'America ran below, and, when taken, assured Hugh Conway that it was only a *ruse de guerre*, as they had intended popping out upon him, when he should attempt to board; but somehow the *manœuvre* failed—which seems truly astonishing! They say we acted very unfairly, by not informing them we intended to attack them the day we did, which happened precisely the day they did *not* expect it, after having been regularly prepared for it for several days preceding that ill-chosen one. To this reasonable objection for our breach of etiquette we may attribute the assurance of the captain of the Northumberland to Captain Bertie, that we were entirely deceived, if we imagined we had gained a *victory*, it was not even worthy of the name of *combat*,—'ce n'est qu'une boucherie où vous n'avez montré ni science ni tactique.' I think the ferocious courage that could dictate this observation, from a man who was a *prisoner* to his conqueror, is worthy of admiration, and of a piece with that of the Jacobin, who fired her upper guns when her lower deck was under water. The officers of the Vengeur were carrying prisoners to one of our ships, when theirs went down;

and when our people were scarce able to support the sight of our enemies in their horrid situation, the French devils looked on the catastrophe of their countrymen with perfect coolness. The cartridges on board the French ships, taken and used in the fleet generally, were mostly made of the fine painted church music used in the cathedrals, and of the *preuves de noblesse* of the principal families, many hundred years old, and illuminated with the genealogical tree. There was a decree of the Convention for applying the archives of the nobility to that particular purpose. I may tell you that my father has received the freedom of the city, and of the Skinners' Company, in two gold boxes of 100*l.* each, and also that of the Goldsmiths' Company without a box.

"Friday, July 4.—The sailors are to-day to receive part of the prize money, two guineas each; about one pound more, it is hoped, will be the remainder of their share. Government has taken off the 5 per cent. usually paid out of it, as an encouragement and proof of their approbation of this fleet. Above ten thousand pounds have already been subscribed at Lloyd's for the widows, and children, and wounded sailors; in short, the country seems to think nothing can be a sufficient reward for those by whom this victory has been gained.

"It would amuse you to hear the titles which the officers wish my father to have, as they choose him to be a marquis; though some of the sailors when disputing on this point the other day, one of them was

heard to say, 'A marquis, you blockhead, the King must make him one of the blood royal!' *Entre nous*, if he intends to be anything more, 'Duke de la Montagne' would be a pretty title, if his top-masts had not prevented it. I should prefer that, as it would give me the title of Lady Molly Molehill; but as that title is out of the question, that of Duke Sans Pareil was proposed, there being already a Duke of Northumberland. Marquis le Juste, or if a French title will not sit well upon him, Marquis of Torbay, it is thought, would be a title that would completely refute all the insolence of *last* year. I think I have now sent you all my stories, except that Tom Packenham, having fired away in a very rude style on one of the French men-of-war, and observing they did not answer the compliment in the manner he expected, stopped his fire, and desired to know if the ship had struck. On being answered, they had not, he hallooed out, in great rage, 'Then, d—n ye, why do you not fire?' Remarking that one of the enemy's ships had shot away the top-masts of one commanded by his particular friend, Pakenham declared with an oath, 'I'll pay you for that;' and bearing down on the Frenchman, he gave him a broadside for the affront offered to his friend. After the action of the 29th, he sent word to my father, that his men and guns were quite ready for another touch, but they must tow him into the line, for his ship would not stir, and then he would do his duty.

The French monsters were so persuaded their fire must sink our ships, that nothing could convince them they had not sunk several. The officers of the Impetueux, prisoners on board our ships, assured Captain Payne they had seen with their own eyes a ship, painted red and black, which had particularly troubled them by sticking close to them, go to the bottom, and no declaration of Jack Payne's that he and his Russell were *both* above water, could make them credit his assertion. As so many declared themselves eye-witnesses of this fact, Payne and his ship must henceforth be considered as *revenants*, for at Portsmouth they or their ghosts certainly are at this moment. I will now only add some of the toasts that have been given, and also used on transparencies:—'May the French ever know Howe to be master of the sea!'—'The two first words of the Third Psalm.'—The day we sailed in the Aquilon, the King gave—'The Admiral, with the Union on the top-mast head; he who alone deserves to wear it.' The common acclamation of the mob at Portsmouth was, 'God save the King, and Lord Howe to defend him!' . . . . . A good omen: the Brunswick sunk the Jacobin;* and amongst all the sovereigns at the heads of the ships, though many were severely wounded, not *one* crown was either shot or even scratched. This is a fact. . . . . .

(Signed) "MARY HOWE."

* This was a very common mistake.

CHAPTER IX.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE WESTERN FLEET.

Resumes the command at St. Helens—Puts to sea with a splendid fleet—Makes several detachments—Driven back by bad weather to Torbay—Hears of five sail of French ships of the line at sea—Hastens off Ushant, and cruizes to the westward—Wishes to resign—Prevented by the King—Report of French fleet being at sea—Sails and ascertains it was not so—Rejoices at Bridport's victory—Gives up prize-money and all advantages of commander-in-chief to the fleet actively employed—Plan of keeping a fleet at St. Helens—Subordination of seamen in the fleet—Fault of the captains—Gallant conduct of Sir A. Douglas—Soldiers serving as marines—Discussions with Horse Guards—Complains of his infirmities—General of Marines—Vice and Rear-Admirals of England—Medals, delay in distributing—Consequences of—Activity of his mind in naval concerns—Resignation of his command.

THE great American and West India convoy, consisting of more than 200 sail of ships of immense value, and of so much importance to the French Government, for the supplies it was to bring for their army, that they risked the loss of their grand fleet for its safety, arrived in port a few days after the battle of the 1st of June; and about the same time Admiral Montague, with his squadron of six sail of the line, put into Plymouth Sound, having escorted his convoys to the required latitude. Here he was

immediately reinforced with three sail of the line and a frigate, and ordered to sea forthwith, for the purpose of endeavouring to intercept some of the enemy's ships disabled in the late actions, or others that might have separated from the main body of the fleet. Having arrived between L'Orient and Brest, he discovered the enemy's fleet, with their disabled ships in tow; but they were already advanced so near to the latter port, as to preclude all hope of bringing them to action with a successful issue.

On the 9th of August, Lord Howe returned to Portsmouth to resume the command of the Channel fleet, with instructions to put to sea when in all respects ready. On the 22nd the whole of his ships, consisting of thirty-seven sail of the line and seven frigates, were assembled at St. Helens. He had under his orders Admiral Lord Bridport, the Vice-Admirals the Honourable W. Cornwallis, Sir Allan Gardner and Caldwell, and the Rear-Admirals the Honourable Sir George Elphinstone, and Sir Thomas Rich, Bart. To these were added a reserve of Portuguese ships, consisting of four seventy-fours, one sixty-four, and three frigates. With this splendid fleet he set sail on the 3rd of September, the principal object being to cover the numerous and valuable outward and homeward bound convoys; and probably intended, at the same time, to impress the enemy with a proper idea of our naval superiority and resources, in being able to send to sea a fleet of

such magnitude, so speedily after the great victory of the 1st of June. The admiral cruized about Ushant and the Scilly Islands, detaching ships as necessary for the protection of the several convoys, and also for the annoyance of the enemy's trade.

The Portuguese squadron was soon found to have suffered such damage from the westerly gales, prevalent at this time of the year, as to render it necessary to send them into Plymouth for repairs, and to take care of their sick, the number of whom was rapidly increasing. Nor did our ships wholly escape the effects of the strong gales, several of which were ordered into the nearest ports to repair their damages. The loss of topmasts, and the splitting of sails, are described as something very remarkable; which more than ever convinced Lord Howe there was something defective in their construction or ballasting. He directed two detachments to be made from the fleet; four sail of the line under Vice-Admiral Caldwell, and seven sail of the line under Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Rich. The Channel fleet was thus reduced to twenty-five sail of the line, the same number that engaged the French on the 1st of June; all of which, together with the squadron under Sir Thomas Rich, were driven by the tempestuous weather, that occurred on the two last days of October, to seek shelter in Torbay. From this anchorage, Lord Howe wrote thus to the Admiralty:—"Having returns of the complaints for which I have heretofore

found benefit in the use of the Bath waters, I am with much concern obliged to renew my request to be relieved in the command of the fleet, the important duties of which my infirmities render me unable to discharge." In reply, he is told that, "Renewing your request to be relieved in the command of the Channel fleet, in order to go to Bath, as you have had returns of the complaints for which the waters at that place have proved beneficial, I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you, that they are much concerned at the account you give of the state of your health, and that leave will be given to your lordship to go to Bath for the recovery of it, when you return from the present intended service;" and they further approved of his having returned to Torbay.

Captain Hamilton, of the Canada, arriving in the evening of the 8th of November, with intelligence of his having been chased, in company with the Alexander, by five French ships of the line, the Admiral next morning put to sea, standing across the Channel with a press of sail for Ushant, sixty leagues to the westward of which the enemy's ships had been seen. An almost unintermitting fog prevailed, with little wind and calms, from the 9th to the 14th, on the latter of which days the fleet was fifty-four leagues west of Ushant, not having fallen in with any of the enemy's ships. Lord Howe continued to cruize till the 21st, nearly on the track on which the

enemy had been seen, and proceeded 120 leagues to the westward, on the same parallel from Ushant, when the southerly and south-westerly gales set in with such violence that, the ships being dispersed, it was judged prudent to stand back to the eastward; and the weather becoming still more boisterous and squally, and several ships having parted company, the commander-in-chief decided on proceeding up Channel to Spithead, where he arrived on the 29th of November.

Nothing further at this late season of the year was required from the fleet at sea; and his lordship's health not having much improved, he became more and more desirous of giving up the command: in one of his letters he says, "In the operations of the next year I hope I shall have no concern." Indeed, nothing but the pressing solicitations of the King prevented him at this time from sending in his resignation. In the early part of January 1795, he writes thus, "I have lately intimated to you, my dear Curtis, the hopes I entertained of being released from a charge attended with too many circumstances of anxiety and dissatisfaction, for me not to be solicitous of resigning. My application to the Admiralty, to that effect, has been productive of so serious a requisition, from the goodness of the King, as compels me to resume my painful situation, though the inconveniences of a winter campaign have been dispensed with." His lordship, however, could not permit himself to

dispense with them when a suitable occasion appeared to demand his services.

In the spring of the year 1795, information was received by Government that the French fleet, consisting of thirty-two sail of the line, and several frigates, had put to sea from Brest. Lord Howe immediately hoisted his flag in the Queen Charlotte, and sailed from Torbay with thirty-nine sail of the line, two of fifty and two of forty-four guns, besides nineteen frigates; out of which he had to provide convoys for the Mediterranean, Jamaica, and Leeward Islands, as well as for the East Indian and African trade. He soon learned, however, that the French had sustained such damage in a heavy gale of wind, in which the Revolutionaire, Parker's three-decker, foundered, as to compel their return to Brest. Having therefore provided for the several convoys, and seen them all safe to a certain distance, Earl Howe returned to Spithead, looking previously into Brest to satisfy himself that no enemy's fleet remained at sea. This was the last time his lordship's flag was up.

During the years 1795 and 1796, with the exception of the short cruize above-mentioned, Lord Howe was permitted to remain on shore on the plea of ill health, notwithstanding his anxious desire not to be relieved from the charge of the fleet; it having been so contrary to every feeling of his heart, throughout a long life of service, to hold an appointment—almost

a nominal one—the duties of which he was unable to perform to his own satisfaction; still his whole mind was in the profession. The account of Lord Bridport's victory of the 23rd of June put him in high spirits. "Lord Bridport's brilliant success against the French fleet will facilitate, in all probability, that of another operation which interests us equally, in a hope that it may be as advantageously terminated. I have no account (he continues,) of the particulars from Vice-Admiral Cornwallis, respecting his rencontre with the Brest squadrons, but I hear it was of a nature to reflect the highest credit upon his conduct." In the same month he says, "I am getting better by degrees; and though, to be sure, I should prefer that *we* should be the agents when anything honourable and advantageous to the country is performed, I am perfectly ready to acknowledge that the public interest has not suffered by my absence." And in speaking of Pellew, "who," he says, "has written handsomely, as well as acted well, on the subject of his exertions," he adds, "and it seems yet, as if the enemy had adopted the plan of harassing our trade, rather than of thinking to make a struggle for the dominion of the sea."

Circumstanced as Lord Howe now was, under a probability of never again being able to hoist his flag, and yet not permitted to resign; prompted by that noble and generous feeling which actuated him through life, and disdaining to receive the emoluments arising from the situation he held in a service,

in which the state of his health rendered it morally certain he would never again take an active share, he determined on making a voluntary surrender of those advantages which every commander-in-chief, before and after him, whether on shore or afloat, had considered his due, and made no scrúple in appropriating to himself. But his own letter will best explain his feelings on this subject, and the decisive steps he took to effect his intentions:—"The interview," he says, "I have had this morning was settled perfectly *à l'aimable*, with respect to all misunderstandings, in conversation or by letter, arising; and I am permitted to remain on shore, in respect of the next intended employment of our ship, for the purpose of going to Bath, upon the benefits resulting from which, and the occurrences of the times, my further engagements in the professional line will depend. But to defeat the supposition that I have quitted my office, and to facilitate, at the same time, my proposition to leave the emoluments to those who are in the actual performance of the services, which my present state of health does not permit me to undertake, my public letter to the Board is limited to a temporary leave of absence, and to request that it may be judged expedient, for the future appointment of the ships of the Channel fleet, to communicate the instructions by direct intercourse with the Admiralty, instead of passing them through me; whereby the profits the commanders of the ships may derive from their good fortune will centre among themselves alone. The Queen Charlotte will still

appear as the ship reserved for me, when I may be able to resume the command of the fleet."

Five days after this letter was written, the Queen Charlotte and several other ships were taken from under his command, and he was directed to instruct Sir Roger Curtis to remove his flag into some other ship "remaining under his [Lord Howe's] command." The ships ordered to be withdrawn amounted to *eighteen* sail of the line and ten frigates; those retained on his list, to *thirteen* sail of the line and three frigates; and thus abridging the number of officers and men who were intended by his lordship to reap the benefit of his great liberality. The same Admiralty letter, he says, "expresses the mode in which it is judged expedient for giving validity and effect to my desire not to withhold from others the pecuniary advantages of a station, the duties of which I am not in a situation to perform." In another letter he observes, "I believe I expressed, in my last, that I saw not the necessity of taking the ships so appointed from under my general command, to fulfil the intention for leaving the temporary chief commander possessed of the benefits annexed to captures, whilst I remain on shore; but I see that the ideas of the Board do not exactly correspond with mine in all their modes of signifying their decisions."

Lord Spencer had now succeeded to the administration of naval affairs. Of the reasons for Lord

Chatham's retreat from the Board of Admiralty, at so critical a period, Lord Howe pretends not to know, but observes that "Lord Spencer, who is to succeed him, is a young man of singular probity and worth; has much application, and, I believe, intelligent capacity; and those who may have business or intercourse with him will find him to be of a most pleasing character."

A favourite system of Lord Howe was to have a certain number of ships stationed at St. Helens, particularly those completed with landsmen and others who, never having served together before, would be advantageously separated from the rest of the fleet, for practising their nautical and military duties apart. Exclusive of the primary object of preventing the enemy's cruizers infesting the approaches to that anchorage, he deemed it the best position for occasionally annoying the trade of the enemy on their own coasts. In sending to Sir Roger Curtis his instructions on this head, he says, "It will be necessary, I think, that you should acquaint the Admiralty when you find you can consistently order any ships to St. Helens from Spithead; observing that you had so done in consequence of my instructions, of which you will send a copy. If the Board disapproves of such disposition of the ships, apprized, as they will be, of the temporary separation to which they may be liable, their counter orders will discharge me from reproach, and exempt me from being

again subject to the little flippancy of expression, as in a letter sent at the time, on the subject of similar instructions before given, representing it as being a matter on which I was myself to determine in virtue of my station." His lordship is decidedly averse from keeping ships at sea in all weathers, blockading a port from which, he observes, "the enemy can always be in readiness to escape after a gale of wind, by which the blockading squadron has been driven off and dispersed, the ships much damaged in their masts, sails, and rigging, and their crews disheartened and disgusted." He again observes, "I have often had occasion to explain to principals, that an enemy is not to be restrained from putting to sea by a station taken off their port with a barely superior fleet." Lord St. Vincent's opinion was, that no blockade could be efficient without anchoring.

It is obvious, from his correspondence, that Lord Howe, at this period, perceived a feeling of discontent to have recently crept into the minds of the seamen, and he does not scruple to lay the blame on the captains, who kept their men as prisoners on board, when they came into harbour, while they themselves spent a great part of their time on shore, leaving the command of their ships to subordinate officers. So far back as the end of 1794, Lord Howe thus writes:—"I hope the disturbance on board the Culloden will have been happily, as I conceive it ought to be, firmly resisted. The means, I am con-

scious, are delicate in execution; but I can hardly imagine consequences more necessary to be guarded against than those not unlikely to be expected from the introduction of *delegates* amongst us."

It appears that a letter, signed "A Delegate," was addressed to Lord Bridport, then second in command (Lord Howe being absent), which stated that the ship's company, a great part of whom were in a state of mutiny, would *surrender* on the following propositions:—"A new ship, or the old one docked, or all the people at present between decks draughted on board of different ships, or as your lordship shall think proper; and your lordship's word and honour not to punish any man concerned in the present business, or to mention or remember it hereafter." Captain Troubridge however had applied for a court-martial on ten of the ringleaders; of whom two were acquitted, and eight sentenced to be hanged by the neck. The word *delegate* was rather alarming, but it evidently appeared that the mutiny was solely occasioned by the apprehension of the Culloden's unseaworthiness, in consequence of her having been aground.

While his lordship again expresses his great satisfaction at the intelligence of the result of Lord Bridport's action of the 23rd of June, he states his apprehension that the three prizes, taken in tow by the 90-gun ships, would be with difficulty and some danger worked out of the bay. The Queen

Charlotte bore her part in the action most nobly, and though but incidentally mentioned by Lord Bridport, she had more men killed and wounded than any other ship of his squadron. She was still commanded by Lord Howe's brave captain, Sir A. Douglas, of whose conduct Bowen writes in terms of the highest praise. In fact, the extraordinary exertions of Sir A. Douglas in working the Queen Charlotte, the rearmost ship in the squadron in the evening, when the French fleet were seen, till she became the leading ship in the morning, obtained universal praise. Labouring under severe illness, occasioned by the wound in the head on the 1st of June, he remained on deck the whole night, taking advantage of every little breeze of wind, trimming the sails, conning the ship, until, to the admiration of all, she was seen at day-break taking the lead to engage the enemy. "It appears," says Lord Howe, "they have had a very sharp set-to—and when I advert to the disregard of him (Douglas) in the official letter, it is with concern I see that the truly brave should not be equally memorable for their liberality." But there was no liberality, nor even common courtesy, observed by Lord Bridport towards Earl Howe, or any of his followers. He says, in his dispatch, that the three prizes were with difficulty retained; but, owing to a mean and paltry jealousy, he does not say one word how mainly instrumental the Queen Charlotte was in first capturing and then securing them. But the

strange conduct of Lord Bridport will be explained hereafter.

On the 9th of September 1795, Howe again expresses his uneasiness on the subject of further dissatisfaction manifested by seamen in the fleet, and particularly of some disturbances in the Cæsar. "I am sorry," he says, "for the appearances of discontent shown in the Cæsar. A letter of complaint, it is true, might be written, as if on the part of many, though the dissatisfaction existed only in but few. No cause for uneasiness having been acknowledged on the inquiry, I don't agree in the policy of the measure of removing numbers of men to other ships —a measure which exposes their former captain to the imputation of misconduct, while it gratifies the desire of (perhaps misbehaving) men to change their situation, without assurance of just pretensions to such indulgence." His lordship might have gone further, and urged the impolicy of infecting other ships by the introduction of discontented or mischievous men among their crews.

Towards the close of the year 1795, a discussion arose between the Admiralty and the Horse Guards, "whether officers belonging to his Majesty's land forces, whilst borne on the books of his Majesty's ships and doing duty as marines, are amenable to naval courts-martial for offences committed on board such ships." The case arose from a Lieutenant Fitzgerald, of the 12th regiment, being dismissed, by

sentence of a naval court-martial, from his Majesty's service, "for having behaved with contempt to Captain Tyler, of the Diadem, when in the execution of his duty."

The Duke of York demurred to the sentence, and had the officer restored. He denied the right of a naval court-martial to try a military officer. The admirals took up the question, on the high ground that naval discipline absolutely required, and the law expressly sanctioned, that any person serving in the fleet, and on full pay, was amenable to naval courts-martial. Lord St. Vincent expressed his opinion most strongly on this point, in which he was joined by Lord Howe, Lord Hugh Seymour, and many other flag-officers. The Duke of York had obtained from his Majesty an additional article to be inserted in the military instructions, which was so strongly remonstrated against, as destructive of all naval discipline, and, as the admirals said, of the navy itself, that it was recalled and modified by his Royal Highness, which induced Lord Howe to recommend moderation. He says, "I am much grieved to be under a necessity to say that I could not, if present, (at a meeting of flag-officers,) have concurred in the terms of those representations, fully as I join in opinion with the admirals on the just construction of our existing naval laws; more especially after a modification of the exceptionable circumstances in the instructions, which had been issued, was pro-

fessed to be impending. It strikes me that the determination should have been waited for, and I own I fear very many undesirable consequences, in a great disunion of the two professional corps, may ensue from so public and general a discontent as has been on one side expressed; when also I hear that, on the other, little less jealousy and ill-humour are avowed. What the event might be I confess I was at a loss to devise; of such magnitude do the evils of the discussion, in the form it has now taken, appear to me. More wisdom than I am gifted with is requisite to re-establish the concord which, until very lately, subsisted between the two corps."

On the following day, he says, "I sincerely hope that the revocation of the instruction issued by the Duke of York may prevent all those baneful contentions, which you will have seen, by my letter of yesterday's date, I apprehended would ensue from a disunion between the two corps, and which I still fear can only be prevented by a discontinuance of the service of the troops in lieu of marines." Earl Howe saw the question in its true light, and from this time forward soldiers ceased to be employed as marines in the fleet.

The Duke of York, however, behaved with becoming regard and deference to the navy on this unpleasant occasion; he proposed to Lord Spencer to have the conduct of the officer submitted to a military court-martial; he suggested, also, whether an army

officer misbehaving on board a ship of war might not be placed under arrest, and tried at home or abroad before a military tribunal; but as neither of these proposals were considered admissible, he submitted the following case to the law-officers of the Crown:—

"Whether officers belonging to his Majesty's land forces, whilst borne on the books of his Majesty's ships, and doing the duty of marines, are amenable to naval courts-martial for offences committed on board such ships?

"We are of opinion that there are some offences, specified in 22 Geo. II., c. 33, for the commission of which, officers belonging to his Majesty's land forces, whilst borne on the books of his Majesty's ships, and doing duty as marines, are, in common with all other persons in the fleet, amenable to naval courts-martial; although we do not think, upon such explanation as has been given us of the authority under which they are put on board, and are borne upon the books and do duty, that such officers can be considered as marine forces, or that they are punishable by naval courts-martial in any other character than that of persons in the fleet.

(Signed by)

"*William Scott,* *William Battine,*
John Scott, *Spencer Perceval.*"

On this opinion being sent to the Admiralty, they desired it might be referred back to the Crown lawyers for their further consideration and explanation, "as

the opinions already given by them are neither distinct in principle, nor satisfactory with respect to the particular case to which they were intended to apply."

After a long preamble and explanation, not much to the purpose, they state their opinion, "that officers and soldiers of his Majesty's land forces, when doing duty in his Majesty's ships as marines, cannot be considered as persons *in full pay in his Majesty's fleet* within the meaning of the 4th section of the Act, the *pay* intended in that clause being, as we think, *naval pay only*, and, therefore, that land forces are not amenable to naval courts-martial; and as Lieutenant Fitzgerald was not *in full pay in the fleet*, he was not liable to be tried by naval court-martial.

(This opinion is signed by)

"*William Scott, John Mitford,*
William Battine, Spencer Perceval."

Under such nice and subtile distinctions, it was found that the only chance of preserving the discipline of the navy was, to get rid of soldiers altogether serving as marines in the fleet. Lord Howe, in the plain and honest simplicity of his heart, expresses his astonishment that the same men, in the same month, should subscribe their names to two opinions, if not in direct contradiction, at least inconsistent with each other. It is evident that his Lordship had not, in the course of his long service, had much to do with lawyers.

On the 7th of January 1796, Lord Howe writes from Porter's Lodge a long letter on the subject of the instructions for captains, which in his opinion required pruning in many parts, "but it is too long since I occupied that station, to satisfy myself that the few notes I have made upon them, on a cursory perusal, are at all complete." And in speaking of the selection of certain officers to be appointed to his ships, which it would seem had not been complied with, he says, "Upon the whole, my gratification on this point seems of little moment;"—and he adds, in a strain of great humility, "To have the favourable opinion of our brethren, I esteem one of the most grateful honours to be obtained. But the views of things and ideas of a man, at my time of life, are so different from those of younger men, placed in directive situations, who feel (in their powers to enforce their sentiments) an ample justification for their adherence to them; and I am so peculiarly circumstanced in other respects, that I daily confirm myself in the assurance, that seventy years of age, upon which I so nearly verge, is not at all too soon to think of voluntary retirement; thus preceding the call, which may be daily expected, of the public, to quit a situation requiring better constitutional, as well as mental, faculties than I can boast."

No decay, however, in his mental faculties is, up to this time, discoverable in any part of his correspondence; and soon after this he was called upon to act

on an occasion which proved that, though his constitution was weak, his mind was still vigorous. Indeed, we find it busily employed on passing events, and more particularly on everything regarding the navy, its ships, its officers, and its seamen, with the most lively interest. The frequency of courts-martial, he truly observes, causes a great interruption to very important concerns at the ports of outfit, and he considers it a matter of regret that a maritime jurisdiction could not be established in the river to take cognizance of ordinary misdemeanors. He is rather desponding of public affairs, from the taint which the country seems to have received from the French Revolution, but avows himself to be only a shallow politician, not however without anxieties which, he says, "an enfeebled constitution renders more impressive, when exertion should supersede regret." He ventures, at the same time, to pass a criticism on Burke's celebrated letter. "It has not," he observes, "appeared to me so much a subject of admiration, as it seems the fashion to speak of it here in town. The brightness of his imagination is undoubtedly evident in many parts; but I do not like his high estimation of his own services, which are represented as if almost above reward; nor the enforcement of the Duke of Bedford's ancestors' demerits, in comparison with himself, as a ground for depreciating the duke. Neither do the disinterested assurances of a professed politician weigh so much with me, as of

many other characters reduced to a similar necessity to offer a justification of their conduct."

On the decease of Admiral Forbes, in March 1796, Earl Howe was appointed general of marines. "This," he says, "alters my brevet power in the flag we have sailed under since 1790; having gained it, however, by the least eligible of all titles—that of age and survivorship—in a state not much more active than that of my predecessor. My office of Vice-Admiral of England, I am given to understand, is to be withdrawn from me; though, in fact, the patent which confers it empowers the tenant to exercise a supreme authority *over all* (union flag included) *the navies and seas of England*, whenever the Sovereign, or Lord High Admiral, or Commissioners of the Admiralty, may think fit to authorize the Vice-Admiral of England (the Lieutenant or Deputy) to assume such exercise of its powers."

The offices of Vice and Rear-Admiral of Great Britain are not of modern date, nor the patents uniform in their terms of tenure. The Duke of York, in 1660, gave a commission of Vice-Admiral to the Earl of Sandwich *for life*. In 1672, he appointed by patent Prince Rupert to be Vice-Admiral; and on his death, in 1682, he was succeeded by the Duke of Grafton. At the Revolution, Admiral Herbert, who had been Rear-Admiral in 1683, was made Vice-Admiral. In 1687, King James appointed Sir Richard Strickland Rear-Admiral; and in 1704, the

Prince of Denmark gave a commission of Rear-Admiral of England to Sir Cloudesley Shovel; since which time, these honorary distinctions appear to have been conferred on the most distinguished and meritorious officers of the navy.

Lord Howe has estimated the powers of this officer (the Vice-Admiral) correctly, but he has not stated that the possibility might occur of his being obliged to *assume* them. The contingency might, indeed, have happened in our time. If a Lord High Admiral should die while in office, his *council* from that moment are *functi officio*, and consequently incapacitated from doing a single act. Who then, it may be asked, is to perform the current and constant duties of the Admiralty in the mean time, during the preparation of a new patent?

This question has been mooted, and the opinion held is, that the "Vice-Admiral of Great Britain and Lieutenant of the Admiralty thereof" is the proper person, on the demise of the Lord High Admiral, to step, *ad interim*, into his place; and that it would become his duty to do so; and, in his absence, the Rear-Admiral would be the person. Thus viewed, a case *might* happen in which these offices would not, strictly speaking, be considered sinecures, though, in point of fact, and in the literal acceptation of the word, they are so. But they are not, as sinecure offices generally have been, obtained by purchase or by favour, but have always been conferred as hono-

rary distinctions for good and meritorious and, where it could be done, for brilliant and distinguished services.

These considerations, given in evidence before the Sinecure Committee, (and the scanty salaries, perhaps, that of the Vice being 434*l.*, and of the Rear 342*l.*,) saved the two ancient and honourable offices of Vice-Admiral and Rear-Admiral of Great Britain from that fate, which befel the Generals and Colonels of Marines, and which being modern and, it must be admitted, useless appointments, (except as rewards for distinguished naval services,) were less leniently dealt with.

On the 17th of April 1796, Lord Howe was ordered down to Portsmouth to preside at a court-martial, to try the Honourable Vice-Admiral Cornwallis, on charges preferred against him, by the Admiralty, of disobedience of orders.

The facts were these:—On proceeding to the West Indies in the Royal Sovereign, in command of a squadron, the flag-ship ran foul of the Bellisarius troop ship, and so disabled herself as to render her return to Spithead necessary.

This step taken by the Vice-Admiral was considered contrary to orders, which implied, at least, though not expressed, that he ought to have shifted his flag into one of the other ships: moreover, after his return he is accused of disobedience, in not proceeding in the Astrea frigate as ordered; and two charges are accordingly preferred against him. The court

consisted of ten flag-officers and three captains. Their sentence was that, for inattention to the orders he had received, *misconduct was imputable to him*, in not having shifted his flag to the Mars or Minotaur; but in consideration of circumstances, the court *acquitted him of any disobedience* in his conduct on that occasion; and with respect to his having disobeyed the orders of the Admiralty by not going in the Astrea frigate,—they found the charge *not proved*, and, therefore, *acquitted* him.

Lord Howe regretted very much that the Admiralty should have thought it necessary to take this step, having a very high opinion of Cornwallis's character, and being an ardent admirer of the gallant encounter which, in the preceding year, his little squadron of five sail of the line and two frigates had with a French fleet of thirteen line-of-battle ships and fourteen frigates. "Not having," he says, "yet seen the charge, I cannot form any opinion as to the mode of proceeding. The order for the Admiral to put to sea immediately in the frigate implies a dereliction of the strong ground for disapprobation—'the not proceeding in one of the line-of-battle ships under his orders.' If, on the other side, a *refusal* to embark in the frigate, after he was so directed, is the basis of the charge, it seems at present to me, that his letter to the Board, in which the refusal is expressed, contains all the requisite proofs thereof." On this occasion, Lord Howe affords an instance of his precision

in minute matters. "I think the dress," he says, "in which they (the admirals) attend the King at St. James's would be consistently descriptive of their character on any other service, and sufficiently appropriate on this occasion. I shall, therefore, only bring with me my *half-dress* uniform; but if I could be informed in time, I would wear the new or the old frock, as would be most consonant with the dress which only could be worn by the other admirals."

In June 1796, when at Bath, Lord Howe had some conversation with Lord Spencer on the subject of the medals given, or to be given, in consequence of the actions of the 29th of May and the 1st of June; and from him he understood it was then decidedly meant to extend the institution of a Naval Order for military services, which would require some little further delay, in order to regulate the insignia. This meditated extension however of medals would appear to have been abandoned. The unnecessary delay in gratifying those who were to receive them had just a contrary effect, and created no little disgust. The dispensers of favours, in this our government departments, seem little mindful of the old Latin adage, *Bis dat qui cito dat.* Something of this feeling of displeasure among the officers may be collected from the following extract of a letter from Lord Howe, dated the 28th of March 1797, nearly *three years* after the battle for which the medal was ordered to be given :—

"Since the change of weather I think I acquire more strength; insomuch that I purpose paying my duty at St. James's next Friday, in discharge of the required acknowledgment, by kissing hands on the receipt of the medal. But I am much at a loss to acquit myself properly, if the Chapter for the Garter is soon to follow: I can fall upon my knees (but more readily to the ground) as the ceremony requires. Lord Spencer might as well have left your appointments to stand, as they were expressed upon the medal. With such attention however to minutiæ of that sort, it is a misfortune, in my opinion, that he has not seen the propriety and benefit, which an extension of similar honours would have produced if conferred on the captains of frigates, who have so exemplarily distinguished themselves by their *conduct*, as well as bravery, on various occasions.

"It appears to have been insinuated, in a quarter where one would least expect that a doubt should be entertained, that the officers at Portsmouth slight the institution of that honorary badge. In what manner that disregard is professed to be shown, I know not, any more than I do the authors of the report. But to testify my deference for the gracious intention, I mean to wear mine in common, when dressed for the day, alike without as with my naval uniform. Of this perhaps I may hear more when I have been able to leave my house, which I have not quitted since I came to town; and I hope to collect

what was meant concerning the chain, wherein I am at present under some uncertainty. The officers concerned in the Spanish victory of the 14th of February being to have the medal, it becomes a question of some import whether they are to have the chain also. I design to wear mine at a venture next Friday; but inquiry into these matters seems too minute a subject to pursue at a time when we have so many serious attentions to interest us."

To proceed to the narrative of events connected with the Earl's command of the year 1796. On the 7th July he writes thus to his constant correspondent:—"You are very kind in your consideration of me, under the circumstances alluded to in my last. Still very much an invalid, and divested of that ministerial countenance by which the exercise of my authority in the fleet can only derive support, you will less disapprove my earnestness (yet but privately intimated) to be released from my important charge. When arrived, moreover, at the time of life that men's faculties become impaired, it is of prudence to quit the public world before its good opinion is withdrawn entirely, and the foundation of our consequence in it destroyed. To that intimation, however, it was not condescended to make any reply; and I know not yet, whether I am considered in the light of a person allowed to seek for quiet in retirement, or subject to the requisitions as heretofore, when the call is made upon me to resume my official employment."

From the whole of his correspondence, however, it is quite clear that, desirous as he might be of relinquishing all command, his mind was fully and constantly occupied with the concerns of the fleet; his great pleasure being to hear that matters were going on well, and more especially in his favourite ship the Charlotte, still under the command of his old captain Sir A. Douglas. "The letters," he says, "I have received from you since you left Spithead give me the satisfaction of knowing you are going on well. The order which you inform me prevailed, and the attention to the training of the ships while under Sir Allan Gardner, gave me great pleasure, and promises very essentially to the *polish* of our fleets. You need not to have also told me that it has been since continued, otherwise than as the season of the year has afforded opportunities not unfavourable for evolutions." But while his mind is thus occupied his infirmities press heavily upon him. "Of myself," he says, "I cannot speak more advantageously than heretofore; as I cannot get the weakness in my feet and ancles removed. If tepid bathing, now my object to try, has not that effect, I shall look upon my infirmities as established for life; and I shall then be only to know, not to witness, the abilities you will exhibit in an independent and directive capacity, which my judgment assures me will also obtain public acknowledgment."

In the autumn of 1796, and the commencement of

1797, Lord Howe remained at Bath, for the benefit of the waters; but about the end of January, he says, "The being yet only able to walk across my room three or four times on my crutches, at intervals, is the utmost of my advancement, though all feverish symptoms have for some weeks ceased; I cannot, therefore, at present judge for what time I may be longer detained at this place." But whether at Bath, Grafton-street, or Porter's—whether in a tolerable state of health, or debilitated by gout—the navy and naval subjects are ever uppermost in his mind. It was at Bath he first heard of the victory obtained by Sir John Jervis over the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent, and on the 4th of March writes as follows:—"We have this moment received here the account of Sir John Jervis's very splendid victory over the Spanish fleet. It certainly cannot be too highly spoken of. But I hope it will not lull us into a neglect of those attentions which our immediate interests near home require; but, on the contrary, stimulate us to an imitation of the activity of that very distinguished admiral and his most gallant associates, on a still more important occasion." His observations on that victory have already been noticed.

Thus, whether in sickness or in health, was his mind sensibly alive to all naval transactions; his hours of confinement were passed in perfecting the code of signals, and naval tactics, and instructions to the captains for the internal discipline of their ships. But

although fully competent to receive and examine all returns from the subordinate admirals under his command, and to issue the necessary orders that might be required thereon, which were usually given in his own hand-writing, and which, it is remarkable, never varied under any circumstances; yet it is evident, from the following extract of a letter of the 9th of May, dated from Grafton-street, that he did not feel quite at ease in holding his office of commander-in-chief on shore any longer, and that, in fact, he had finally resigned it some days before:—"The uncertainty when you may receive this prevents me from replying now to the several inquiries in your letter, further than with respect to my resignation of my late command. Not being in such a state of constitutional health and use of my feet, as to be able to resume my station in the command of the fleet, it became necessary to make other provisions (and certainly much better than I could boast) for the suitable direction of it." He was accordingly superseded in the command of the Channel fleet by Admiral Lord Bridport.

CHAPTER X.

THE YEAR OF MUTINIES, 1797.

The year 1797 pregnant with mutiny in the fleet—Distinguished also for two general and various single actions—Lord Howe receives petitions from several ships—Sends them to the Admiralty—Writes to Portsmouth—Mutiny breaks out there—The Board of Admiralty proceeds thither—Returns *re infecta*—Proceedings of government seem to be satisfactory to the men—Mutiny breaks out again—Lord Howe requested to go down—Visits the ships—Confers with the delegates in the Queen Charlotte—Exacts conditions from them, before he interferes—Terminates their discontents satisfactorily—Consents to the removal of certain officers from their ships, a *sine qua non* on the part of the crews—List of the numbers of officers removed—Letter to the Duke of Portland—Mutiny at the Nore—In Lord Duncan's fleet—In Lord St. Vincent's off Cadiz—Prompt and decisive measures of his Lordship put a stop to it—Mutiny at the Cape—Decisive measures of Lord Macartney and Admiral Pringle—Improved condition of the seamen of the navy.

THE year 1797 may be distinguished in naval annals as a year pregnant with mutiny in the fleets, both at home and abroad. In looking over the list of courts-martial for that year, it appears that no less than seventy-nine were held in the different squadrons and ships for mutiny and mutinous behaviour alone, some on individuals singly, others on combinations. In this year also occurred that most horrible mutiny in, and piratical seizure of, his Majesty's ship Hermione, com-

manded by Captain Pigot, which was carried by the mutineers into La Guira, after murdering the captain, the three lieutenants, purser, surgeon, lieutenant of marines, and three inferior officers. But this year was distinguished also by the two gallant actions of Sir John Jervis, off Cape St. Vincent, and Admiral Duncan, off the Texel; and a great number of single conflicts in various parts of the globe, which terminated with brilliant success.

When the first disturbance and insubordination of the crews broke out in the Channel fleet, it was looked upon as an event more awful and alarming than any that perhaps had ever occurred in the naval history of Great Britain; the more alarming, as the combined energies of the nation, which had never failed in the critical moment of danger, must have been, on this momentous occasion, palsied and unavailing, had not the plague been stayed in time. In this pressing extremity the services of Lord Howe were put in requisition; and it is only because his name is intimately connected with the commencement and termination of this eventful history, that a general view of the transactions is introduced into the present work. We have seen him, in the early part of this year, confined to his room at Bath, and walking on crutches, which he was enabled only to throw away by the end of March. Yet, thus enfeebled to a degree that determined him to relinquish all command of the fleet, such was the high opinion enter-

tained, both by the King and the government, of the influence he possessed over the officers and men of the navy, that recourse was had to his assistance in this moment of impending danger, though at that time he had actually resigned all naval command. He at once, notwithstanding, obeyed the call, and, though unable to boast of a *mens sana in corpore sano*, yet his mind was as sound, his heart as whole, and his intellects as clear, as at any previous period of his life. The first application he received was from the seamen themselves: he had long been considered as the seamen's friend, and to him, therefore, it was very natural they should first submit their case.

On the 4th of March 1797, being then at Bath for the benefit of the waters, he says, "I have received, within the last three days, four petitions, as they are termed, as coming from the Royal George, Formidable, Ramillies, and *Queen Charlotte*, the purport of them to solicit my interposition with the Admiralty that the seamen may, in their turn, experience an equal act of munificence as that shown to the army and militia, in the provision made for an increase to their pay, and for their wives and families; alleging that the last could only obtain such relief as the seamen themselves sent them out of their pay. The petitions from the three last-mentioned ships, dated the 28th of last month, are I think evidently copied by the same person, though the writing appears different on a cursory inspection. Neither the

motive nor the matter of these papers require any comment; but I shall take them with me to town, when I return thither, for Lord Spencer's private information. I suspect the whole of them to be the fabrication of the same individual. Should it prove otherwise, or that the idea of such pursuit should have been adopted by communication of the purpose to the different ships' companies, it may require some such explanation as the difference of the circumstances between the soldier and the seaman admits of, to prove to the latter that his advantages are still more considerable than the precarious situation admits of being extended to the former. But the wisdom of the Admiralty will best decide hereon. To which, however, it seems material to know, whether such expectations or claims appear to have been very generally circulated in the ships of war."

The Earl, in the mean time, thought it right to ascertain, if possible, the real state of the case, and for this purpose wrote to Sir Peter Parker, the port-admiral, and to Lord Bridport, then in command of the fleet, and received in reply the opinion that both the petitions were the work of some ill-disposed person: in consequence of this, no danger was apprehended either by Lord Howe or Lord Spencer. It soon afterwards however appeared, that there had been for some time before a regular organised plan, should these petitions be disregarded, for taking the several ships from the command of the officers, who

were still, most unaccountably ignorant of what was going on. The Admiralty remained equally ignorant until the 12th of April, when they were informed by Sir Peter Parker that intelligence had been communicated to him of a plan, concerted by the seamen, to take the command of the ships from the officers, which was to be carried into execution on the 16th of that month. Immediately on the receipt of this information orders were sent down, by telegraph, for the ships to proceed forthwith to sea. Admiral Lord Bridport, in consequence of these orders, made the signal to prepare for sailing; on which, almost immediately, the seamen mounted on the rigging of every ship, and loud cheers passed through the fleet. This act of insubordination was followed by another still more daring—that of taking all command from the officers; then choosing two delegates in each ship, who were sent on board the Queen Charlotte, where they held a council in the great cabin of Lord Howe; and orders were there written out and issued to all the ships, that the seamen were required to take oaths of fidelity to the cause.

These delegates, acting in a better and legitimate cause, would have been entitled to every praise for their moderation, and for the resolution they passed and kept, to maintain order, to enforce sobriety, and to pay all due respect to the officers from whom they had taken the command. To ensure this effectually, they caused yard-ropes to be reeved at the main and

fore yard-arms of each ship, to inspire terror, though they had no occasion to use them, except for ducking minor delinquents in the sea. They held their appointed meetings in Lord Howe's state-cabin, and the usual military honours were paid to them whenever they went over the side. They inflicted corporal punishment on all who got drunk, or who would have incurred such punishment in the usual course of the service. They allowed all frigates with convoys to sail, in order that the commerce of the country should sustain no injury.

In this state of things it was deemed expedient that a Board of Admiralty should proceed to Portsmouth; to which place Lord Spencer, Lord Arden, and Rear-Admiral Young, with Mr. Secretary Marsden, went on the 17th; and on the 18th, after a long discussion with Lord Bridport, Sir Allan Gardner, Colpoys, Pole, and Halloway, in which they all represented, in the strongest and most decided manner, that it was absolutely and unavoidably necessary to concede, and to grant them something like the terms demanded, certain additional allowances of pay were agreed by the Board to be offered to them,—namely, 4*s*. to able, 3*s*. to ordinary, and 2*s*. to landmen, per month, in addition to their ordinary pay. An Order to this effect was given to Lord Bridport to be carried to the Royal Charlotte by Gardner, Colpoys, and Pole. The only answer on the part of the delegates was, that the proposal should be taken into consideration,

and their determination transmitted the following morning. Admiral Gardner, a high-minded and gallant officer, lost his temper in the discussion with the delegates, and seizing one of them by the collar, swore he would have them all hanged; but he was pacified by his brother-officers. Lord Spencer, it seems, was very urgent that the Board should consent to his going on board the Queen Charlotte, and trying what effect his personal remonstrance and exhortation might have on the men; but this was unanimously objected to by the Board, as placing too important a stake in the hands of mutineers, who might then dictate their own terms; and that, at any rate, it would be derogatory for the First Lord of the Admiralty to enter into any personal discussion with them. Indeed, when the answer arrived, rejecting the terms offered, and proposing others, the Board judged it not only derogatory, but inexpedient, to continue longer at Portsmouth, parleying with them on the spot, and thus affording them the opportunity of making new conditions. They therefore left the place, and on the 21st proceeded to London, *re infecta*.

The demands, however, of the seamen were so reasonable, that it was deemed expedient and indeed an act of justice, to concede them, and Lord Bridport was authorised to make them acquainted therewith; but still they were not satisfied. In thanking the Lords of the Admiralty for complying with their demands with regard to an increase of pay, they add: "But we beg leave to remind your Lordships, that

it is a firm resolution, that until the flour in port be removed, the vegetables and pensions augmented, the grievances of private ships redressed, an Act passed, and His Majesty's most gracious pardon for the fleet now lying at Spithead be granted, the fleet will not lift an anchor; and this is the total and final answer!" These points being also conceded, another difficulty arose. The Board was told the delegates insisted, that they would not take the words of the Lords of the Admiralty for the pardon; and it therefore became necessary to advise his Majesty to grant it under his sign manual. A proclamation was agreed to by the Government, despatched from Windsor, and sent from thence to Portsmouth without delay. It was read on board the several ships, and received with three cheers. The Queen Charlotte's people, however, with the delegates on board, insisted upon seeing the original instrument, which fortunately had been sent down with the printed copies; and upon this, the *insignia* of rebellion were struck, and the crews declared themselves ready to perform whatever their officers should command them; and the first act of their obedience was, to proceed with a division of the fleet to St. Helens.

Matters being thus settled, it was hoped nothing more would be heard of the discontents in the fleet; but a fatality seems to have attended the proceedings of the Government. In the House of Lords, the ministers deprecated any mention of the disorders in the fleet; and Lord Spencer declared he was not

aware of any message likely to come before them on the subject. Mr. Pitt had made a motion for a supply to increase the wages of seamen. The conversation in the Lords, and the delay which took place in the Commons, produced a fresh irritation in the suspicious minds of the seamen. They concluded there was, at least, some hesitation in fulfilling the promises that had been made to them; and they clamoured loudly for their being sanctioned by an Act of Parliament.

But this was not all. The Board of Admiralty issued an order, bearing date the 1st of May, to the admirals and captains of the fleet, which contained paragraphs highly injudicious, and calculated to increase the suspicion of the seamen. It stated that, "from the disposition lately shown by the seamen belonging to several of his Majesty's ships, it had become highly necessary that the strictest attention should be paid by all officers in his Majesty's service, not only to their own conduct, but to the conduct of those who may be under their orders; the more effectually to ensure a proper subordination and discipline, and to prevent, as far as may be, all discontent among the seamen." Unnecessary as this was, at any time, as both Articles of War and Instructions enjoin it, such an Order, at this particular moment, reflecting on the conduct of both officers and men was, to say the least of it, indiscreet and inexpedient. But what follows is still more so. It introduces a new Instruction for all captains of his Majesty's

ships "To see that the arms and ammunition belonging to the marines be constantly kept in good order, and fit for immediate service, as well in harbour as at sea." This was evidently pointed at the employment of marines to quell any mutinous movement among the seamen; and lest they should not so understand it, the following paragraph was added—"That the captains and commanders of his Majesty's ships be particularly attentive to the conduct of the men under their command; and that they be ready, on the first appearance of mutiny, to use the most vigorous means to suppress it, and to bring the ringleaders to punishment."

This offensive order, for it could not be considered in any other light both by officers and men, is the more remarkable, as being issued from a Board who had condescended, not many days before, to enter into discussion with the refractory seamen, to make concessions to them, and to give promises which had not yet been fulfilled. The consequence was, that coupling what was mentioned in the Lords, and the delay, which they did not comprehend, in the Commons, and the promulgation of this Order, a second mutiny broke out on the 7th of May in the ships at St. Helens and Spithead; those in the former place acting in concert as before, appointing delegates, cheering, and taking command of the fleet from their officers. The London and Marlborough still remained at Spithead: delegates from St. Helens were despatched to visit them. Admiral Colpoys refused,

in obedience to his Instructions, to admit them, ordered the officers to be armed, the marines to be in readiness, and the ports to be let down; neither would he allow the boats of the delegates to come alongside. The seamen of the London, after consulting together, resolved they should go on board: the officers resisted, and ordered the men to go down below: some of them refused, and one man began to unlash one of the foremost guns, to point it aft towards the quarter-deck: he was cautioned by one of the lieutenants, and told he would fire at him if he did not desist: the man continued to unlash the gun: the lieutenant fired, and shot him dead on the spot. The men rushed to arms, and instantly succeeded in disarming the officers, and were joined by the marines.

They now resolved to hang the lieutenant who had shot the man; but the admiral stepped forward, said he alone was to blame, if blame there was, for the officer had acted under his orders, which he had received from the Admiralty. This, together with the intercession of the chaplain and the surgeon, but more, perhaps, by the bold and undaunted courage shown by the admiral, saved the lieutenant's life. Admiral Patten, in his circumstantial account of the mutiny, states that, "when the seamen were deliberating whether or not they should put the admiral to death on the spot, a man was heard to call him 'a damned bloody rascal,' or some such words. Notwithstanding the furious irritation which at that moment agitated

the whole crew, the habit of respect and regard for a beloved commander prevailed so far, as to turn part of their resentment against the person who dared to use such language to their admiral, who was uncommonly regarded, and they threatened to punish, or throw the offender overboard."

The mutineers now weighed anchor in the two ships, and proceeded with them to join the fleet at St. Helens. Here, it is said, that one of the ship's companies talked openly of carrying her to France; but when this was made known to the delegates, they threatened immediate destruction to that ship, if any such language continued to be held; and in order to prevent her from holding any communication with the shore (from whence it was supposed the suggestion was derived), guard-boats were stationed to row round her night and day. The idea, however, of the seamen having had any abettors from evil-disposed persons on shore, or that the Revolution in France had been at all accessory to what had occurred in the fleet, was satisfactorily disproved. There were no grounds for supposing that the men were at all contaminated with the dangerous doctrines, seditiously propagated at this time in our own country, of liberty, equality, and the rights of man; no contagion of this kind had infected the minds of the honest but deluded seamen: their conduct was influenced by a dislike of particular officers, but mostly with the view of obtaining an increase of pay, to which, it was fully

and universally admitted, they were in justice entitled. In fact, the sole aim of the seamen was to have their grievances redressed.

They now however began to send on shore all such officers as were not agreeable to them, so that the ships were wholly in their possession; and it became evident that some decisive measure must be adopted, to set the minds of the seamen at ease with regard to the measures in progress, and now nearly complete, for acquiescing in their demands, and for conceding every point at issue.

Whether at the suggestion of the King, as was believed, or of Mr. Pitt, which is more probable, it was determined to send down Lord Howe with full powers to bring matters, if possible, to a final conclusion. He had hitherto always been esteemed by the seamen as their friend, though, in the course of the discussions that had taken place, they had expressed their dissatisfaction at his not having noticed the letters addressed to him. They were probably not aware that they had been sent to the proper quarter, from whence alone their grievances could be attended to. Considering the state of Lord Howe's health, and his recent recovery from a severe fit of gout, he might with great propriety have declined the mission, but a sense of duty to his king and country did not allow him to hesitate. Lady Howe determined on accompanying him to Portsmouth.

The first step taken by the Earl on his arrival,

on the 11th of May, was to visit all the line-of-battle ships at Spithead and St. Helens, to ascertain precisely what their respective grievances were. On the morning of the 12th he received a draft of a proclamation to be prepared, eventually to pass the great seal, and to be worded consonant with the declaration he might find it expedient to make, conformably with his Instructions from the King. In his letter of this date to Lord Spencer, after further communication with the deputies of the several ships, he says, "the discussion, for a time, seemed approaching to a desirable issue; but there appears to be some watchful agents, not yet to be traced, who neglect no opportunity to start fresh difficulties for obstructing the desirable accommodation." But the appearance among them of the man who had so frequently led them to battle; who was ever ready to befriend their wants, and to indulge their wishes, ultimately prevailed over the bad passions of the few, who were supposed to have misled the many, and gave that confidence to the well-disposed, which the presence of the veteran hero had never failed to inspire.

> Tum pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem
> Conspexere, silent, arectisque auribus astant;
> Iste regit dictis animos, et pectora mulcet.

The first point to be gained, and which his lordship insisted upon as a *sine quâ non*, was this—that the seamen *generally* should express contrition for what had happened, and send him, officially, a petition, praying him to interpose his good offices. "I left the

fleet to-day," he says, "under agreement with the deputies that the seamen, at large, should request, in suitable terms of decency and contrition, my interposition to obtain the King's pardon for their transgressions. And, in order to qualify their *unalterable adherence* to the change of particular officers of different ships, I engaged to use my best endeavours to obtain their removal, upon receiving, in addition to the former dutiful application, a *special one* of the same nature from each of the ships concerned, praying that his Majesty would indulge them with the appointment of other officers to those ships. And it was settled, with the few deputies I could assemble at the time, that they should meet me to-morrow, as early as they were able, for delivering these petitions, in the Royal William at Spithead; whereupon I should take such immediate steps as circumstances would permit." And he adds, "I have not the satisfaction to perceive that some fresh difficulties may not occur to obstruct the amicable accommodation of this serious concern, by the too easy facility of working upon the unsuspecting minds of the well-disposed seamen. Without the full and speedy concurrence of Government in the terms I have stated, I shall despair of becoming the happy instrument in the restoration of order and discipline in the fleet."

On the following day, the 13th, the deputies from each ship presented their petitions accordingly to Earl Howe on board the Royal William. They were drawn up in the true style and character of

British seamen, all in different terms, and in different hand-writing; all expressing great contrition, and imploring the Noble Earl's intercession; but every one of them expressing also a most decided and determined resolution, not again to receive on board the respective ships those officers from whom they had suffered ill-treatment, and for which they had sent them ashore. They disclaim, mostly, any wish that the usual mode of punishment, for breach of discipline or other offences, should be done away with; and it is a remarkable fact that, throughout the whole proceedings, not one syllable was ever uttered by them either against flogging or impressment—two such fertile topics for declamation among the sensitive philanthropists of the House of Commons. In his letter of this day to Lord Spencer, Lord Howe says, "Having notified, by means of the telegraph, the promising appearance of a satisfactory termination of all the discontents in the fleet, to be declared to-morrow, I must beg leave to confine my present intimations to the necessity for replacing a greater number of officers, than I flattered myself would have been desired; and the new appointments will be proceeded upon in the proper mode, with all possible dispatch. This request has been complied with, under the pretext of an equal desire, on the part of the officers, not to be employed in ships where exceptions, without specification of facts, have been taken to their conduct. However ineligible the concession, it was become indispensably necessary." And he

desires that printed Orders of the Board (consonant with the tenor of the one ordered) may be sent down to him without delay; "they being now the only apparent requisites to authorize the immediate delivery of the pardon, and re-establishment of order in the fleet."

Thus, by extreme good management, and the complete confidence which the seamen had in Lord Howe, whose name had become, like the King's, a tower of strength in the fleet, was this plague-spot wiped out. The confidence appears to have been mutual. In a note to Sir Evan Nepean, respecting the change of a word in the draft he sent up, his Lordship says, "This change made in Lord Howe's hasty-drawn copy was obviously proper; but, much tired as he has been with his daily employment here, and the wearying attention to the various discussions he is engaged in, to quiet the most suspicious, but most generous, minds he thinks he ever met with in the same class of men, occupy him almost without intermission."

It was evidently a matter of necessity that the obnoxious officers should not go back to their ships; the officers themselves knew it; and had no desire to return. Admiral Colpoys had particularly requested the Admiralty to supersede him in the London. Mortifying as it must have been to Lord Howe to meet the delegates of the disaffected seamen in his own once favourite cabin of the Royal Charlotte, it was undoubtedly no less gratifying to find that, in this

ship, under the command of his former captain and friend, Douglas, not one single officer of any description was required to be displaced. Without mentioning names or ships, the numbers and ranks of officers removed may be stated as follows:—

1 Admiral.
4 Captains.
29 Lieutenants.
5 Captains of Marines.
3 Lieutenants of ditto.
3 Masters.
4 Surgeons.
1 Chaplain.
17 Master's Mates.
25 Midshipmen.
7 Gunners, Boatswains, and Carpenters.
3 Serjeants, and 2 Corporals of Marines.
3 Masters-at-Arms.

Much obloquy was bestowed on Lord Howe in certain quarters for making these concessions to the seamen, though obviously necessary for the sake both of themselves and of the officers. Some of the members of the Board of Admiralty, not very wisely, seem to have joined in the censure. One of them, however, who had been of the party to Portsmouth, was somewhat more liberally disposed. He knew, and it may be inferred the whole Board knew, that this concession was a point directed in the King's instructions to be granted. In a letter from Admiral Young, the first naval adviser to Lord Spencer, addressed to Lord Hugh Seymour, and dated the 26th of May 1797, is the following extract:—

"I am afraid much mischief has been done by the mode in which the mutineers at Spithead were treated by Lord Howe; but the concession made, by letting the officers be sent on shore, was not entirely to be attributed to him. The ministers were so anxious to get the fleet to sea, *that they directed it to be done*, rather than protract the settlement of the business."

Others, again, said that Lord Howe was in his dotage; that he was too infirm and exhausted to know what he conceded; just as it was said he was after the battle of the 1st of June, and led astray by others. Nay, there appears among some manuscript slips of paper the following memorandum, but without any name or authority annexed:—

"Some time after Lord Spencer succeeded to the Admiralty, Sir John Colpoys was appointed to hoist his flag in the Northumberland (Sir E. Owen his captain). This was suddenly changed, without Colpoys being aware of it; and on the admiral asking for some explanation, Lord Spencer told him a letter from Lord Bridport stated that there were murmurs in the fleet, it being a breach of promise to the service that Colpoys should be employed again. Lord Hugh Seymour was sent to Porters, by Lord Spencer, to learn if such a promise had ever been made by Lord Howe to the seamen; to which he replied, that he really was in such a state of nervous debility at the moment, that he could not be answerable for

the particular expressions he might have used to the seamen on that occasion."

The person who wrote this could have known very little of Lord Howe's character, or he would not have talked of *nervous debility*. As little did he know of Lord Spencer, who was too considerate and high-minded to offer to Lord Howe, what he must have felt to be little short of an insult; or of Lord Hugh Seymour, who had too great a veneration for his old commander-in-chief, to condescend to be the bearer of such a message. The Lords of the Admiralty had no need of asking such a question, being already completely informed on the subject. They knew very well that no restrictions of officers from serving again were ever conceded or even asked for; the only concession was, that those officers, who were sent on shore, should not be returned to the ships to which they belonged. In fact, the whole story is a fabrication. Sir J. Colpoys was never *named* for the Northumberland, nor for any other ship, until appointed by Lord St. Vincent, Port Admiral at Plymouth in 1803, from whence he was removed to the Admiralty, by Lord Melville, in 1804. The Northumberland was never *ordered* to be fitted as a flag ship, and Captain (now Admiral) Sir Edward Owen was only first *made* into that ship a few weeks before. There is no nervous nor mental debility discoverable in the following clear and neat report of the Noble Earl's proceedings, written in his own hand at the happy

conclusion of his mission, and addressed to his Grace the Duke of Portland; it is dated Portsmouth, the 16th of May, the day on which he had the satisfaction of seeing the fleet weigh their anchors and proceed to sea:—

"My Lord,—Having already advised your Grace of my arrival at Portsmouth on the 11th instant, I have now the honour to inform you that I went off immediately to the fleet at St. Helens.

"I had intercourse on different days with the crews of several ships, and held particular conversations with those deputed seamen, from whom I might most easily learn the general sense and disposition of the fleet, upon the subject of their alleged grievances.

"I explained to them the nature and purpose of the commission, with which I had the honour to be charged, in the comprehensive and concise terms in which the King's sentiments were expressed in my Instructions: not doubting that they had been deceived by ill-founded conceptions, I assured them, that there never had been any change or hesitation in his Majesty's gracious intentions to carry into full effect the assurances which had been given to them, in his Majesty's name, by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty; that the necessary steps for that purpose were actually in the regular course of proceeding at the very time, when the disorders on board the ships recommenced; and that those steps had since been completed by an Act of Parliament, which (as they were already apprised) had been

passed, and had received the Royal Assent, for confirming those assurances, and carrying them into full execution.

"On the head of their general and originally-stated grievances, I found them not difficult to be satisfied, by adverting to the confirmation by the King and Parliament of the hopes held out to them by the Commissioners of the Admiralty.

"The only remaining complaint was, the ill-treatment which some of the seamen professed they had met with from some of their officers.

"Several written charges were presented to me upon this point. They declared, however, at the same time, that their complaints were merely tendered to show that they have not acted from a spirit of disobedience, but that they meant to represent what they deemed just ground of complaint; and they earnestly requested that no proceeding should be instituted upon such charges, to the prejudice of those officers.

"Applications being, on the other side, made on the part of the officers themselves, entreating that they might not be required to resume their command over men, who had taken such exceptions to their conduct, I judged fit to acquiesce in what was now the mutual desire of both officers and seamen in the fleet.

"The several conversations I had with the seamen, to impress them with a due sense of their misbehaviour, terminated in their ready assurances never to

engage again in similar combinations; and that, whatever cause of complaint might at any time hereafter arise, it should be represented in the regular manner, by application only from the parties aggrieved. I was, therefore, induced to declare the King's pardon, and to deliver the copies of the proclamation with which I was intrusted. Their sentiments of duty, respect, and gratitude for his Majesty's goodness were, in consequence, expressed in such terms, as much increased the satisfaction with which I executed that part of my authority.

"Discontents, confined however to the attainment of the removal of some officers, prevailed in the squadron of Sir Roger Curtis recently brought to Spithead. These complaints were soon, with the assistance of the Rear-Admiral's prudent management, finally accommodated; and regular discipline, I flatter myself, permanently established in those ships likewise.

"It is incumbent on me further to acquaint your Grace, that I experienced every possible regard to my recommendations during the whole of this service, from the Commander-in-chief, Sir Peter Parker, and Lord Bridport, as well as the other admirals of the fleet; and also from the General Sir William Pitt, and the military corps at Portsmouth, in aid of my endeavours to promote the benefit of his Majesty's service, upon this most interesting occasion.

"I have the honour, &c.

(Signed) "HOWE."

On his return to town, Lord Howe waited on Lord Spencer, and urged strongly the justice of continuing all the officers on full pay, who had been displaced by the disorderly ships' crews, until they could be otherwise employed, acquainting him that he had desired Sir Peter Parker to suggest the propriety of it, officially. And on Lord Howe's return from Windsor, after a communication with the King, he thus writes:—"I heard there, that the officers were to be put on full pay, until replaced, even though the proposition had not been moved by Sir Peter Parker; but whether originating at the Admiralty, or by suggestion from a higher authority, I cannot say. It was justice due to them, as it was not deemed expedient to call them to account for their imputed misconduct." He goes on to say:—

"The conditions meant to be exacted, by the crews of Lord Hugh Seymour's ships, is a very unpleasant circumstance; and by pretensions of a similar kind in the frigate-detachments, it appears that the assumed right of rejecting their officers, unheard in their defence, will go through the fleet, at home and abroad. I am glad you have convinced Lord Hugh of the high degree of impropriety, in my opinion, when commanders, not so compelled, assume a liberty to quit their ships. I had entertained a distant hope that others of your ships' companies would have followed the example of the Prince's, by desiring the recall of some of their officers. Several of the petty-officers I

had also hoped would be transferred, or requested to return to their former ships."

It is clear from the correspondence of Lord Howe about this period, that his mind was not at ease with regard to the disorders and the want of discipline in the fleet. On the 27th of May he writes thus:—

"The derangements in the fleet, and in part of the land forces, are of a most unpleasant nature. Those in the army will, I hope, be finally composed. The extravagances of the seamen are not attended to, I think, in the manner they ought to be. We seem here to think that the *legal* authorities, with which we are vested, are sufficient to secure as well as to claim respect; and that the same impression we have formed on them cannot fail of operating with equal effect on our subordinates. I have submitted my sentiments, uncalled for (but where I thought they were likely to be best regarded), of the precautions to be taken against the use our enemies may make of our disorganization. How far they may be attended to, in the various important concerns of the moment, is more than I can at present judge; but I have freely stated wherein I thought the marine administration of them has been (in respect to the disorders among the seamen) highly erroneous; the sense of the officers of the ships little less so, in my opinion, than that of the seamen. The extent to which the latter (not timely instructed) may proceed, is yet not possible to be foreseen; insomuch that I

almost think some attempts upon our coasts, commencing by the enemy, seem to be the last hope we have for the recovery of our senses."

In fact, the mutiny had by this time extended to the ships at the Nore, in which it was carried on with much more ferocity than in the Channel fleet. In the latter it was left doubtful, from the moderation of the seamen, whether they had been instigated by wicked and designing men not belonging to the fleet; but in that where it was now raging, not a doubt could be entertained on the subject. This serious mutiny is thus noticed by Lord Howe in a letter of the 1st of June:—

"I have received your interesting letter of yesterday. The demand for the ships from your port has been made for the North Sea, on account of the disorders in some of the ships of Admiral Duncan's squadron, which have been brought to the Nore, that their crews may be paid their six months in twelve, conformably with the *letter of the Act;* and, as it is said, that the Texel squadron had put to sea.

"The seamen of the Sandwich, and another ship, at the Nore, have proceeded to such an extent as to fire upon the St. Fiorenzo, when the captain, supported by his men, pushed by them on his passage to Yarmouth Roads, for receiving the Prince of Wirtemberg and his bride, and carrying them over to the continent. The Admiralty Board have been down to Sheerness, but attempted in vain to restore order and discipline in those ships; and the men are left,

as I understand, to become temperate at their leisure. It is true, some of their claims are of the most extravagant nature; but I know not what methods were taken to explain and convince them, that their errors must involve them in the destruction of their country, should they continue much longer in the same state of disaffection.

"As to the neglect you describe of the seamen's complaints, I can only impute it to the incompetency of the persons who have the immediate superintendence in the department.

"The complaints in the ships under Lord Bridport, and of your squadron, were of a nature that admitted of immediate rectification; but better knowledge than I possess is requisite on the subject, to satisfy the seeming reasonable discontents, now prevailing, at the delays in the Admiralty Courts, and chicane of the practitioners and prize-agents. I can only observe, that preventive measures rather than correctives are to be preferred for preserving discipline in fleets and armies. It was bad policy not to have made an example of the delinquent commander [who was he?] in another mode than by a simple removal; and proves to me how narrow are the views taken by our naval directors."

A paragraph in another letter, of the 16th of August, concludes his correspondence on this painful subject. He observes, "The occurrences in 1783, when I was first put at the head of the Admiralty,

and when the same steps were taken by several ships' companies to emancipate themselves from the control of their officers, excited my fears and expectations that the experiment would be renewed before the remembrance of the effect had ceased. If exultation is shown, as I feared, at the success on the part of government on this occasion, it may increase the mischief."

The first symptom of insubordination, in Admiral Duncan's fleet, is described in a letter from the admiral, dated Venerable, Yarmouth Roads, 1st May, in which he says, "Yesterday afternoon I was very unexpectedly surprised to hear three cheers given on board the Venerable, by some of her company on the forecastle and in the fore-shrouds, without orders. I immediately assembled the officers, and ordered the marines under arms: being thus prepared, I went on the forecastle and demanded to know the cause of such improper conduct, to which they made no reply; but five of them, appearing more forward than the rest, I ordered aft on the poop, and directed the others to disperse, which they did. Soon after I ordered the hands to be sent aft on the quarter-deck, and the five men to be brought from the poop. I then interrogated them upon their conduct: they had nothing to say for themselves but that, as their friends at Spithead had done so, they thought no harm, and that they wished to know when their increased pay and provisions were to commence:

having satisfied them on that head, pointed out the enormity of the crime of mutiny, and pardoned the offenders, good order was again established; and I have the satisfaction to say, they have behaved very properly ever since.

"The Nassau followed the example of the Venerable, but on Vice-Admiral Onslow demanding the cause, was told, that seeing the Venerable cheer, they thought no harm in doing so, and had no grievances; the rest of the squadron were perfectly quiet."

Towards the end of the month, however, when the admiral ordered the fleet to weigh, to proceed off the Texel, two of the squadron refused, on pretence of being in course of payment; and on the next and following days the whole fleet deserted him, to join the mutineers at the Nore, with the exception of his flag ship the Venerable, and the Adamant. The mutineers, thus reinforced at the Nore, and urged on by a most mischievous and villainous fellow of the name of Parker, proceeded to the greatest extremities:—sent the officers on shore—fired into his Majesty's ships Clyde and San Fiorenzo, when escaping from them—punished the people with the utmost rigour—and sent a deputation to the few remaining ships at Portsmouth, inviting them to join them and insist on further demands. The crews, however, of these ships refused to have any concern with them: declared themselves perfectly satisfied with the indulgences

already granted, and recommended the same feeling to their brethren of the North Sea fleet.

At length, the arbitrary and ferocious conduct of Parker and his delegates, and the brutality exercised by them over the crews of their respective vessels, so disgusted the sailors, that several of the ships withdrew from the wicked confederacy. On the 15th of June the Sandwich, the ship of the port-admiral and the head-quarters of the mutineers, was brought by the seamen under the guns of the fort at Sheerness, having been given up by the crew to her officers, with Parker on board as a prisoner. This wretch was tried by court-martial, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged on board the Sandwich; and twenty-two others of the worst description also underwent the extreme sentence of the law.

It is remarkable enough, that in this daring and outrageous mutiny, when the most extravagant demands were put forth, the words impressment and flogging never, even here, escaped the lips of the delegates, any more than at Portsmouth; neither of these, it would seem, were considered by them as naval grievances; and as to flogging, that punishment, during the mutiny at the Nore, was more severely and more frequently exercised, than by the most rigorous commander of a ship of war.

But the spirit of mutiny and insubordination was not confined to the home ports. Early in July a most daring mutiny broke out on board the St.

George, one of the ships of the fleet under Lord St. Vincent, off Cadiz, which however was happily quelled by the spirited conduct of Captain Peard, her commander, his first-lieutenant, Hartley, and Captain Hinde, who commanded a party of the 25th regiment.* Three men, who had been tried and sentenced to suffer death for mutinous conduct in other ships of the fleet, had been sent on board the St. George for execution on a certain day. The crew, headed by two men, came aft on the quarter-deck to present a letter to the captain, desiring him to intercede with the commander-in-chief in behalf of these condemned men. The captain told them the letter should be sent, but that he highly disapproved of their conduct in coming aft in a body. The next morning he was secretly informed by one of the crew that they meant to assemble again; that they had come to a resolution the prisoners should not be executed on board the St. George. He immediately turned up the hands; told them the commander-in-chief, so far from listening to their remonstrance, had sent him the warrant for execution the following morning; and cautioned them to be on their guard against a few villains in the ship, who were known to him, and whom he should carefully watch.

The same evening, one of the crew came to the captain in great agitation, told him he had overheard that their intention was to take the ship from him

during the night; that articles were drawn up, signed, and sworn to by a very considerable number of the men; and he named the principal men concerned. No time was to be lost; he seized three of the villains at the head of the conspiracy, put them into a boat, and sent them on board the Ville de Paris, the flag-ship, with a charge of "seditiously, mutinously, and traitorously conspiring to deprive him, the captain, and the rest of the officers of his Majesty's ship St. George, of the command of the said ship." The court was assembled, the trial took place, and sentence of death passed on the three ringleaders. Lord St. Vincent, with that prompt and decided conduct for which he had always been distinguished, issued an immediate order that every ship in the squadron should send two boats, with an officer in each, and two marines and soldiers properly armed, alongside his Majesty's ship the St. George, at half-past seven o'clock the next morning (Sunday), to attend a punishment. And the following "General Order" was directed to be read to every ship's company, before the execution:—

"The sentence is to be carried into execution by the crew of the St. George *alone*, and no part of the boats' crews of other ships, as is usual on similar occasions, is to assist in this painful service, in order to mark the high sense the commander-in-chief entertains of the loyalty, fidelity, and subordination of

the fleet, which he will not fail to make known to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and request their lordships to lay it before the King."

Nothing more was heard of the mutiny in the fleet under Lord St. Vincent, except in particular ships, some of which had been sent to him from the Nore and Portsmouth, among others the London and the Marlborough. On this occasion his lordship was severely censured by a certain description of persons for desecrating the sabbath, as they termed it, in causing the execution of the criminals on that day; though the promptitude of the whole proceeding tended, probably more than anything else, to the salvation of the fleet. It required all the energy, firmness, and circumspection of the commander-in-chief to prevent any confederacy among the seamen of the squadron; which summary punishments in several ships, and courts-martial when necessary in others, and above all, the strong measure of intercepting all correspondence, frustrated any attempt at combination. In the midst of all this, a fleet of gun-boats came out of Cadiz, to annoy the in-shore squadron, when it was remarked that those men, who had been foremost in mutinous conduct, were the most anxious to engage them; which made it a kind of joke in the fleet, that, though blockading was a stupid kind of work, it was enlivened by a pleasing variety of hanging and praying, fighting and flogging.

The following little anecdote may convey an idea

of the effect produced on the minds of the men by the firmness, decision, and promptitude of the commander-in-chief, for the support of discipline and subordination in the fleet:—A sailor, newly arrived in one of the Portsmouth ships, being alongside the Ville de Paris in a boat, was describing to a brother sailor in one of the ports, the transactions that had taken place at home, on which another, having heard him, called out, "Messmate, take care what you are saying about that there matter, or old Jarvey will very soon have you up at the yard-arm."

The next scene of a general mutiny took place in the fleet stationed at the Cape of Good Hope; occasioned by mere wantonness, and because it had been fashionable at home. The Admiral, Pringle, was greatly alarmed, but fortunately the Captain-General and Governor, Lord Macartney, was a man resolute as Lord St. Vincent, and saw at once there was but one line to be taken. In concert with the admiral, a message was sent off to the Tremendous, the flagship and rendezvous of the delegates, to say, that if the red flag was not struck before the expiration of two hours, and the white one, as the signal of submission, hoisted, every ship would be sunk by the guns of the Amsterdam battery, close to which they were at anchor. In the mean time the necessary preparations for this purpose had been made, and red-hot shot heated. The Captain-General and the Admiral marched down to the battery, the former

of whom laid his watch upon the parapet, with a full determination, if the white flag was not displayed at the expiration of the time allowed, to sink every ship. The signal of submission, however, was made about a quarter of an hour before the time; and the mutiny was completely crushed.

As evil is not unfrequently productive of good, it so happened in the case of the mutiny. The attention of naval officers was more closely drawn to the consideration and comforts of the men under their command; punishments became less frequent; indulgence of leave to go on shore was more generally extended. Successive Boards of Admiralty have been emulous in their endeavours to better the condition of the seamen, which is now, in fact, superior to that of almost any class of men who must earn a subsistence by the sweat of their brow. A man-of-war's man is better fed, better lodged, better and cheaper clothed, and, in sickness, better taken care of, than any class of labouring men; and when he has completed twenty-one years' service, he may retire, if he wishes it, with a pension for life, from tenpence to fourteenpence a day; and if severely wounded, more than double these sums; or if discharged after fourteen years, or less, for sickness or debility contracted in the service, a pension of sixpence or ninepence a day. Petty and non-commissioned officers have increased pensions, according to the petty or non-commissioned time they may have served. To show the

difference since the time of the mutiny, it may be observed that the number of these out-pensioners at that period was about 1500; at the present time they are from 18,000 to 20,000, and the average amount of the pension of each person is at least as 3 to 1.

Again, when seamen are worn out by old age or infirmity, that noble asylum at Greenwich, unparalleled in the world, is open for the consideration of their claims. The number at present therein is nearly 3000. As a further encouragement for good conduct, and a service of twenty-one years, gratuities are awarded to a certain number of seamen and marines, on the paying off of each ship, which entitle them also to wear a silver medal of the size of half-a-crown, at the third button-hole of their jackets, having on one side of it the words "For long service and good conduct," and on the other, an Anchor and Crown. Neither are the children of seamen neglected. Annexed to Greenwich Hospital is a splendid building, in the midst of a beautiful piece of ground, appropriated as a school for 800 boys and 200 girls, who receive an excellent education; many of the boys in the upper school attaining such progress in mathematics, astronomy, and navigation, as to make them sought after in the merchant service, where by good conduct they become mates and masters.

To every ship in the navy, and to every mess, the Bible, and other books of religious instruction, and also of amusement, are allowed; and the present

Board of Admiralty, anxious to extend the advantages of education to the petty officers, seamen, marines, and boys of the fleet, have recently authorized an additional rating of first-class petty officer in every ship, under the name of "Seaman's Schoolmaster," whom all may attend, and all the boys are required to do so. They are instructed in reading, writing and arithmetic, trigonometry, and keeping a ship's reckoning at sea.

It has been noticed, that flogging and impressment were not once alluded to by the mutineers as grievances. With regard to the first, it is now comparatively trifling, and the power is exercised under such regulations, as to insure its not being resorted to wantonly or capriciously, but only in cases of an aggravated nature; and every instance of it must be reported to the Admiralty; for minor offences, the captains and commanders have recourse to more lenient punishments, which are generally found to answer the same end. It happens, however, that some of the commanders of her Majesty's ships, with the fear of certain sensitive members of the House of Commons before their eyes, have resorted to measures, as substitutes for flogging, far more obnoxious to the seamen—such as keeping their names in what is termed the "black list,"—stopping their leave to go on shore—assigning to them extra duty—withholding their allowance of spirits—mixing them with an additional quantity of water—and various other re-

cently invented punishments, not at all to the taste of the old man-of-war seaman.

With regard to impressment, the Act of William 5 and 6, brought in by Sir James Graham, "for the Encouragement of the Voluntary Enlistment of Seamen," it is to be hoped, will greatly mitigate, if not render unnecessary, that coercive practice, at least on shore, where, being exercised under the public eye, it became the more obnoxious. This Act limits the duration of the service in the navy, in time of war, (to such seamen as may voluntarily enter it,) to five years, when, if they wish it, they will be discharged; or if kept on any especial emergency for six months longer, they will be entitled to one-fourth increase of pay; to those entering within a limited time, after a proclamation calling for the services of seamen, double bounty will be given; and on such as agree to continue a second period of five years, a single additional bounty will be bestowed; and, moreover, seamen having pensions for former services will be allowed to receive such pensions, together with their pay. This encouragement, with the benefits above stated which the seamen now enjoy, and the many superior advantages of a ship-of-war over that of a merchant ship, may be expected to diminish, if not wholly supersede, the necessity for impressment.

CHAPTER XI.

RETIREMENT, ILLNESS, AND DEATH.

Lord Howe finally retires from public life—His family—Accession of fortune—Patronises a farmer's son—Observations on, and praise of, Duncan's victory—Trial by court-martial of Captain Williamson—Howe's recollection of this officer's conduct on a former occasion—His long confinement by ill-health—Reflections on discipline—A family ship—High praise on Lord St. Vincent as a naval officer—Opinion in favour of appointing young officers to command ships of the line—Comments on the action of Mars with L'Hercule—Praise of Lord Nelson—Round sterns of ships—Temperance of Lord Howe—His French cook—His two last letters: the first, containing a comment on Suwarrow's action with the French, and on his own battle of the 1st of June; the second, written sixteen days before his death, on domestic matters, and his own infirmities—By the death of Dr. Warren, and in the absence of Dr. Pitcairn, has recourse to electricity—Supposed to have driven the gout into his head—Dies—Consolatory letter from George the Third, and George Prince of Wales—Mrs. Howe's admirable reply to the former—Attentions of the King, Queen, and Royal Family to the Countess Howe—Intended marriage of Lady Mary with Lord Morton—Death of this amiable Lady—Followed by that of the Countess—Two excellent letters of condolence from the good King George the Third, and one from the Prince of Wales—Loss of Mrs. Howe's papers and correspondence much to be regretted—Probability of much being still in private hands.

THE last, and not the least important, act of Lord Howe's public life—that of bringing back to a sense of their duty the deluded, but really honest, seamen of the fleet—and his previous resignation of all command and authority in the naval service, left him to

the full enjoyment of private life in the tranquil retirement of Porters Lodge—as far, at least, as the intermission of frequent and severe fits of gout can be said to constitute enjoyment. The Countess, and their favourite and accomplished daughter Lady Mary, were the only regular inmates. This young lady had in early life made natural history, more particularly zoology and botany, her study, and Porters afforded her the means of collecting and preserving both living plants and animals. She was a great favourite at Windsor, and spent much time with the Princesses, as one of the ladies of the bedchamber, a situation which she held for several years, but which she had happily resigned about the time of her noble father's retirement from public life. The Countess was a most affectionate wife, watching over her Lord in all his illnesses, accompanying him wherever he went; and when employed afloat, it was her special care that everything was provided for his convenience and comfort. With this small family thus situated, the venerable Earl passed the few remaining years—few they were indeed—in the society of those who loved him, and by whom he was adored.

His fortune was moderate, but fully equal to his expenses: all that he now received from the public, for an unremitting service of fifty-seven years, was the pay of General of Marines (about 1800*l.* a-year, half-pay included). He had no pension, having, it is believed, declined the offer of one after the

battle of the 1st of June. The family of Howe are represented as of kindly and benevolent dispositions, charitable to their poor neighbours, by whom their loss was severely felt when, in the short space of less than three years, the whole of its inmates were swept away by the unrelenting hand of death. It will be seen, however, by a few extracts from the Earl's correspondence, that during the few years of his retirement, and notwithstanding his frequent illness, his mind was in the profession, and his faculties were whole and unimpaired to the last.

Just about this time, a small accession of fortune came into the possession of the Noble Earl, the result of a kind and charitable act in the early part of his life towards an unprotected and friendless orphan, and of confidence and gratitude in return. In the year 1755, Lord Howe took this young man, of the name of *L'Epine*, as his clerk in the Dunkirk, from whence he was transferred with his patron to the Magnanime, where he remained as clerk till 1759, when he procured for him a purser's warrant. In 1762, he was paid off with that ship. In 1765, when Lord Howe became Treasurer of the Navy, he entered him as a clerk in that office, where he remained till 1773, when, on the recommendation of Lord Howe, he was appointed Secretary to Sir Edward Hughes. He returned home from India with a handsome competence, and died in 1788, making Lord Howe his executor, and guardian of an only

surviving daughter; with a bequest of an estate in Bedfordshire, if his daughter died without issue. This estate came into the Earl's possession in April 1798, by Miss L'Epine's decease.

The following letter is given entire, as exhibiting another among the many instances it affords, of the pains he took to do a kind and benevolent act:—

"Kirklington, 31st July, 1797.

"My dear Sir Roger,—Stopping for a couple of days at a friend's house here, in my way to Buxton, and being but a few miles distant from my estate at Epperston, where our young penman, Dufty, resides, I sent for him to dissuade him from his passion for a sea life. But I find him so earnestly (I will not say obstinately, for he urged his suit with the utmost modesty,) bent upon it, that all my representations of the better prospects his qualifications opened to him in a quieter line of life, have been without effect. Prejudiced in his favour, by what I have yet discovered of his temper and character, I am desirous of giving him *the trial* he wishes to make of the profession he has chosen, at my expense; his father being little capable of affording much pecuniary assistance to him on that occasion.

"Having understood, before I left town, that your stay at Portsmouth is likely to be as short as the condition of your ship renders absolutely necessary, I judged best (our separation for so great a distance considered) to send my young protégé to wait at

Portsmouth for your arrival. But not knowing under whose care to place him in the mean time, I have solicited Mr. Turner, our heretofore naval caterer, to become my substitute in providing for the lad's maintenance and lodging, until the arrival of the Prince (Sir Roger's ship); for which expenses I am to be answerable, as my letter to Mr. Turner expresses.

"I don't find the circumstances of the father enable him to make any such allowance of pecuniary assistance to the son, as admits of the latter to set out in any higher station than for becoming a perfect common sailor. Should that finally prove to be the case, the lad must commence his career in the rougher duties of our profession; and as his first engagement is rather to make trial, whether his passion for the sea-service will support him under all the fatiguing exertions, to which the business subjects the practitioner, I am willing to bear any requisite expenses for the purpose—I mean, by payment of such quota as may be necessary for the mess to which he is admitted, and his clothing bills, &c. for fitting him out. With his writing, as you have seen, he has been instructed in the rudiments to fit him for a counting-house, and his father could have actually placed him in that branch of business. His knowledge of the common rules of arithmetic will be an essential aid for making progress in the theory as well as practical branches of his profession. If, therefore, his attachment to it continues, and his character and behaviour

is such, as promise suitable consequences deduced from his application and capacity, I shall willingly pay also for his instruction in navigation, if you can find the means (as I know you have the goodness not to scruple the trouble) to have him instructed therein, if any person can do it in the ship.

"In my recommendation of the lad to Mr. Turner, I have not desired the latter yet to make the purchase of sea-clothing, &c., which the lad will want; meaning to leave that to your appointment, and that it should be confined, in quality and quantity, to the character of *a sailor*, in which he is to set out. For whatever his father may be capable of, or induced to afford him hereafter, it will be usefully applied in his support, when he proves (if he becomes ever so qualified) capable of employment above the character of a fore-mast man. My young sailor, being the bearer of this letter, it is confined merely to the subject of his concerns; more especially as I reckon the easterly winds we have had the last two days will facilitate your speedy return to Spithead.

"Yours ever,

"H."

In October 1797, on reading the Gazette account of Admiral Duncan's victory, he makes the following observation:—"As I understand the Admiral's letter in the Gazette, and his line of battle given with it, I concluded that the rear division led, when he attacked the Dutch, *seemingly*, therefore, in regular order of

battle. But by the letters published in the daily papers, as having been received from officers in the fleet, and also in one I have had from Byard, such regularity (if it was at first observed) was soon discontinued; for those accounts represent, both of our ships as well as those of the enemy, that they had two or three upon one, on either part. It thence seems that greater dispersion prevailed in the progress of the action than I should have thought probable, in so confined a space as was left for the two fleets, so near in-shore."

He then proceeds to make the following comments on this brilliant engagement, so opportunely and so successfully accomplished:—

"This action, upon the whole, reminds us of the ancient Dutch wars; and it further resembles them, inasmuch as one is led to inquire how the seconds a-head and a-stern of such ships as had two or three of their opponents upon them at the same time, were at those moments occupied. It has been, however, a most honourable and fortunate operation; one that cannot be too distinguishably noticed; and I look forward with earnestness for the happy effects of it, deeming it rather of a preventive than progressive nature in the great work of peace; being yet ignorant as to the efficient state of our western fleets, and the reliefs that can be provided for a continuance of their appointments.—I say this in real ignorance of our maritime resources, not in despondency. One

benefit I look for from this celebrated victory is, that it will eradicate the seeds of discontent, which yet appeared ready to vegetate afresh in that northern fleet."

The glory of this victory was in some degree tarnished, like that of the 1st of June, by the misconduct of one captain, whom it was deemed necessary to bring before a court-martial. Captain Williamson, of the Agincourt, was charged, "that, during the engagement of the squadron under the command of Admiral Duncan with the Dutch fleet, on the 11th of October 1797, he did not upon that day, upon signal and order of fight, and upon sight of several of the enemy's ships, which it was his duty to engage, do his duty and obey such signal; and that he did, on the said day, and during the time of action, through cowardice, negligence, or disaffection, keep back, and did not come into fight or engagement, and did not do his utmost to take or destroy such of the enemy's ships as it was his duty to engage." On these charges the Court decided, "That the charges of cowardice and disaffection have not been proved, but that the other parts of the charges have been proved in part; they do, therefore, in consideration of the case, and the nature and degree of the offence, adjudge him to be placed at the bottom of the list of post-captains, and rendered incapable of serving on board any of his Majesty's ships or vessels of the royal navy."

In the same letter above quoted is a paragraph

relating to this unfortunate officer, which proves the accuracy of the Noble Earl's memory.

"If I mistake not," he says, "Williamson, the commander in the Agincourt, was employed in a frigate during the last peace, for carrying dispatches out to the East Indies, and ran his frigate ashore somewhere near the Lizard, in the night, on his return to Channel; pleading in his excuse, at his court-martial, that the accident was caused by the errors in his *master's* reckoning—a minute that, of admonitory benefit for young captains, who often think that point of their examinations, when passing for a lieutenancy, is no longer to be regarded after obtaining independent commands."

This just remark of Earl Howe is highly deserving of consideration, and, in point of fact, has been repeatedly brought before more than one Board of Admiralty. A young midshipman, having passed his examination for a lieutenancy, remains for many years a mate, forgetting all that he had been obliged to learn to enable him to pass, knowing that he would not be subject to any further inquiries into the state of his nautical knowledge. Why should he not pass a second time when he is about to get his commission? Nay, further, why should not a lieutenant, before he obtains a commission as commander, undergo a similar examination to qualify himself for that rank; or, at least, give some proof that he is familiar with the use of a chronometer, and can work a lunar observation? If

it was once considered necessary that a lieutenant, appointed to command a packet, should prove his ability to take and work a lunar observation, and deduce the longitude from chronometers, surely it cannot be thought less necessary that a commander should be able to do so, before he is entrusted with the command of a sloop of war; but the good regulation, regarding packets even, has been discontinued. Young officers of the navy ought not to be allowed to throw their professional education behind them, from the moment they have passed their first examination, and by their ignorance or indifference, leave the fate of the ships, they may afterwards command, "to the errors of the *masters*."

An interval of three months occurs in the Earl's correspondence, which is, on the 2nd of February 1798, after ten weeks' confinement to his bed, renewed with every indication of that vigour of mind which never appears to have deserted him. To this renewed correspondence is the following postscript, written by his Countess:—"Since I wrote last to you, my dear Lord has had so very severe a return of fever (from which he has been but three days out of his bed), that I really avoided writing to you, that you might not go to sea, perhaps for weeks, without hearing of him again. I am thankful I can say he is now recovering, but, though he has written the above, he is infinitely more reduced in strength and flesh than when you saw him—God keep him from another relapse!"

In May of the same year, he says, "My most spirited efforts don't yet exceed a movement farther than from one room to the other without crutches. But though I have been for many weeks but stationary in my progress to amendment, I think within the last eight or ten days I am rather getting forward again; and as temperate weather approaches, may become re-possessed of some locomotive faculties." His mental faculties were all this time in full energy, and employed on his favourite subjects connected with the naval service. "I rejoice much," he says, "that you have got into society with a steady supporter of naval discipline (Lord St. Vincent). The misfortune of the service seems to be, that officers of little experience deem those appointments innovations, which were undisputed principles of discipline antecedent to the peace of 1763." Again he says, "You satisfy me, in your last, that the responsible individuals of the fleet have not yet been long enough in training to have acquired an adequate degree of knowledge in their business. Reflection will often well supply the defect of experience, but when we are wanting in both, we have not always penetration or good sense enough to adopt the suggestions which have not originated with us." In another letter, on the subject of the coast of Ireland, and Beerhaven in particular, he concludes thus—"I congratulate you on the advancement of your son; and though I do not in general

think it desirable to be engaged with very near connexions in our line of business, I yet approve of having him kept with you; so much do I think that well-selected impressions, early inculcated, are of moment in the formation of an officer. Incitements to animate our resolutions have largely abounded this war; but the opportunities and the desire to extend our abilities, in the various distinctions incident to fleet-service, seem yet open for more general cultivation.—Success attend you!"

It is clear from this, that Lord Howe did not approve, and what good officer ever did approve, of what is called a *family* ship? Neither did he approve of *the rule of the service*, as he calls it, prohibiting young captains from commanding line-of-battle ships. Sir Roger Curtis wished to have Larcum, promoted for the 1st of June, as his captain in the Prince, but the *rule* it seems was against it. The following note on this occasion appears in Lord Howe's journal:—"Larcum is, I believe, nearer forty than thirty years of age; and Hope, who commanded the Bellerophon in the late action, between those ages. But the almost youngest captains on the list were employed last year in capital ships; as Elphinstone in the Glory, and Halsted in the London. It may however be alleged with truth, that those officers were placed in ships appropriated to flags; but they were sent in those ships *without* their flag-officers; and I am to

conclude, in being so trusted with the conduct of those ships, it was inferred they were fully competent to the charge.

"Other captains have been appointed to ships of the line, now with me, by the late Admiralty (and I fancy a similar doctrine is held at the present Board), of whom those could be named, who never before commanded a ship of the line, and who, residing in town in discontinuance of all professional duties for ten or twelve years, were never once afloat, unless upon a sea of politics, in a parliamentary character. In conclusion, I might add my opinion that our enemy (of whom it is esteemed an old and admitted maxim that it would be wise to learn) do not select their commanders by seniority in rank, but by their reputed talents."

This appears to have been his opinion at an early period of his flag command. In a minute on Sir Roger Curtis's papers, it is stated that, when Lord Howe mentioned to him his intention to take him as captain of the Eagle, in America, Captain Curtis said he feared he was too young a captain, and not equal to the duties of a flag-ship; on which his Lordship sharply replied, "That is my look-out, Sir, and not yours. If an admiral takes an officer for his captain who is unfit for the situation, the blame rests with him, and from what I have seen of you I am perfectly satisfied with the choice I have made."

The high opinion he entertained of Lord St. Vin-

cent, as a perfect naval officer, is strongly expressed in a letter of June 1798, dated Bognor Rocks, of which the following is an extract:—

"Come here for warm sea-bathing, though not yet arrived long enough to form an opinion of the extent in which it may prove advantageous. The report of your being sent to reinforce Lord St. Vincent was prevalent here some time since, which the sailing of the Toulon squadron probably gave rise to, before even any certain knowledge of it was obtained. I am glad of the appointment, as it may possibly lead to brilliant events, though not such in their consequences as to procure the *Irish title* you had a prospect of acquiring, had you continued on the Bantry Bay service.

"You fully justify my conjectures of the perfectly good discipline your chief admiral would establish, in any fleet he would have to conduct, as I believe I have before intimated in our conversations on such subjects. And being so seconded, with other subordinate flag-officers, who are likely to testify a correspondence in the same pursuits, added to a service of a nature to furnish a variety of instructive incidents—on these foundations, I do look to expect a degree of improvement in naval science, there was never before any prospect of having exemplified; as it must be in a fleet *on foreign service*, where such perfection, as I have always thought possible to arrive at in our profession, would be first to take place; little change

of ships, and consequently of ideas, being liable to happen under such circumstances."

Every letter indeed contains an eulogium on St. Vincent or Nelson: on the former having desired Sir Roger Curtis when writing, to make his kind regards to the great man (Lord Howe), under whom, he said, he had gained most of the useful knowledge he possessed of professional subjects, the Earl says in return, "Were I addressing a Frenchman, I would rely on his inventive genius in the expression of suitable acknowledgments for your admiral's complimentary remembrance. Become a Spaniard in your language, as you may rival that people in Castilian integrity, I will only commission you to assure him, on my behalf, in simple veracity, that his eminent services have not exceeded my expectations, whenever adequate opportunity has occurred for proving the extent of his professional talents." And in the same letter, he observes, "Upon the success of Nelson's operations much will undoubtedly depend towards the happy, and probably speedy, termination of a war, necessary as I esteem it to have been engaged in, at its commencement, how long soever we may be doomed to feel the inconveniences, to which we may be exposed, after the restoration of peace. If Nelson figures in the Mediterranean, as we have just reason to suppose, in case he gets sight of the Toulon armament, his ships will not be left in a state to keep the sea." And when he hears of the

battle of the Nile, "I will only observe," he says, "on the splendid achievements of Nelson, that one of the most remarkable features in the transaction consists in the eminently distinguished conduct of *each* of the captains of his squadron."

The gallant single action of the Mars with L'Hercule was sure to attract his notice, though he had no explanation how it was conducted. "It was engaged," he says, "you know in the night. I conclude, therefore, the Mars ranged up alongside of her opponent, and brushed off the ports on either part when they closed. But I don't suppose the Mars was prepared to have dropt an anchor for retaining her position so closely, when she began her attack. In the night it would certainly require great skill and precision in such an undertaking, practicable as I think it could be made in the day-time; and it seems probable not to have been known that L'Hercule was at an anchor before the Mars got up to her. Great merit was, however, testified in the operation." The facts are these—L'Hercule was compelled by the tide to anchor in the mouth of the Passage du Raz, when Captain Alexander Hood attacked her in a most gallant style, laying his ship so close alongside the enemy as to unhinge a great portion of her lower deck ports. After a bloody conflict of an hour and-a-half, L'Hercule surrendered. Captain Hood received a wound which proved mortal. The Mars had 17 killed, and with the wounded and missing,

her loss amounted to 90. The enemy had 400 killed and wounded. She was a new 74-gun, ship from L'Orient, manned with 700 men.

But his remarks are not confined to naval actions —to the talents or transactions of naval officers, or naval discipline and tactics—the good qualities or defects in ships of war, the innovations in their forms, their masts and rigging, equally engage his attention. By a passage in one of his letters about this time, it would appear that some approximation to the round sterns of Sir Robert Seppings was then in progress. "The alteration of the ships' sterns," he says, "by being closed abaft, and timbered up to the taffrail, has been determined, I understand, as well on account of a pretty general practice of West India origin, by shutting up the stern-walk, as by the more important consideration of the use thereby afforded of stern-chase guns. But if I were worthy of a station among you again, I should regret the loss of my *airing-ground;* though I believe the severity of my last three years' complaint is to be specially ascribed to the wet, and constant currents of air, which gained free passage through the stern bulk-heads and quarter-galleries—more particularly when the wind was aft."

Lord Howe was quite the idol of his family. Suffering, as he did, almost constantly by gout in the latter years of his life, he was frequently precluded from joining the family party at table, and from seeing

as much company as he wished to do; for, though of a reserved disposition, he was not indisposed to join in conversation. Lady Howe received frequent visits from the Queen and young Princesses at Porters. She was a lady rather particular with regard to the keeping a good table, and at one time had a French cook. Lord Howe was always exceedingly temperate in his habits: his appetite was small, and even when well he lived in the plainest manner, and when not in health generally dined alone at an early hour. At such times, the French cook waited on him in the morning to take his order for his own dinner, which day after day, for nearly three weeks, was "a boiled chicken." The cook, who could not understand the regular simplicity of Lord Howe's taste, began to fancy this adherence to the same plain dish was intended as some slight upon his professional skill, and one morning he ventured thus to address him: "Mi Lor, I get superbe pay, and I have notin—not moch to complain." "Well," said Lord Howe, impatiently, "what *do* you complain of?" "Mi Lor, dat you do not allow me de honor to cook your dinner." "I thought you cooked it every day!" said Lord Howe. "Yes, mi Lor, dat is, I boil de shicken, but dere is no cookery in dat." "Then," said Lord Howe, "you may *roast* de shicken to-day." This is from an inmate of the family at the time.

The two last letters to his old and constant correspondent may be given entire, as specimens of his

clear and comprehensive mind, even when the body appears to have been completely broken down by disease; both are dated from Porters Lodge, the former on the 13th of July 1799, and the latter the 20th of July of the same year—this being written sixteen days only before his death. In order fully to comprehend a portion of the former, it is necessary to state that Sir Roger Curtis was on the eve of departing to assume the chief command of the Cape of Good Hope station.

"13th July, 1799.

"The expected ships being arrived, I conclude this will be the last letter I shall have occasion to send you; unless the wind continues in the western quarter, though by the regular variation of it, from the NE., SE., and finally to the NW., I think it probable that we shall have a succession of fine summer weather.

"I am glad you are to have Stavorinus' books. I have run them over rather rapidly, to discover the general tendency of the work; and though it treats mostly of the more eastern settlements of the Dutch, those parts even may not be uselessly meditated upon, in no great improbability, I conceive, that you may be called to take the command in the East Indies, if the war be not speedily terminated.

"Rainier seems to have done incomparably well on that station, but from what I heard of the state of his health some time since, I feared much for his life. If we may judge of the future by the past, in the

negociations at Lisle, it was understood that the Cape particularly was to be retained by us.—How that acquisition then was, or hereafter will be, reconcileable to Holland, if the Stadtholder is to be reinstated in his authority, is much beyond my powers of comprehension. But should it be ultimately determined, Stavorinus' work furnishes many ideas which, under the jurisdiction of a liberal-minded governor, might probably contribute highly to the happiness of individuals as well as benefit to the state, by rendering the settlement not less profitable than convenient —but a truce to comments. You are in possession of the book, and I am sorry you are not also in possession of the authority to carry into execution the many suggestions it appears to contain worthy of notice.

"The French certainly did view the divided situations of Suwarrow's force in the manner it occurs to you; and a passage in Lord William Bentinck's letter seems to imply that, if the Russian General had planned his arrangements so as to be provided for frustrating any attempts upon either of his different appointments, he steered *narrow by;* for the Gazette letter says that, 'when the French line retired behind the Trebbia, *it was too late,* and the troops were *too much fatigued* to make a general attack,'—deferred, therefore, 'for *the next morning.*'

"But if Suwarrow had actually failed of succeeding so amply in the general action as he seems to

have done, not informed, and equally unqualified to judge, of the necessity for his engaging in so many undertakings at the same time, I have another reason why I should suspend my doubts, or venture to question his military capacity. Some occasions in *our* profession, and many I believe incident to the land service, will justify, if not require, more hazard to be ventured than can be systematically defended.

"In our action of the 1st of June, the pushing through the enemy's line from *to windward*, (with respect of each ship against her opponent,) much risk of injury to each other was obvious. It would have been less, had *every ship* (which was not able to secure her adversary by close action to windward) gone through the enemy's line as we did.

"But admitting the risk of mutual injury to be as great, as I believe many officers supposed, the times or peculiar circumstances of the country at that period, and the despondency and consequent discontent which would have prevailed in the kingdom at large, if a less positive decision in our favour had been the event of our efforts, called loudly, in my opinion, for some conclusive issue of the contest. If I am thought to need other justification thereon, might I not urge the occurrences of the 29th of May? In how much shorter time might the body of the fleet have joined us, when we were gotten through the enemy's line to windward, had the body of the fleet tacked to join us, *even before* they had

passed the sternmost of the enemy's ships? Had our ships then tacked, though apparently unable to weather the enemy's sternmost ships, the body of the French being then *from the wind*, on the starboard tack, their separated ships in the rear would have been far enough out of the way of our leading ships, before these last would have arrived in their wake to join the Queen Charlotte.

"What would then have been said of us had we regulated our conduct by the more obvious and more generally approved rule of naval tactics? Thus then do I aim to defend my thesis, that hazards in war are more or less to be so construed, according to the circumstances of the case; and in such manner, I make no doubt, it would be necessary for me to plead in my own defence, were I to answer for the indiscretions chargeable upon me in the direction of the fleet at that time.

"I am much of Lord St. Vincent's opinion, that anchorage is inseparable from the best system of blockades; though when I consider the risks from damage to hulls, masts, and yards, by always keeping the sea for the same purpose, I still think (with the Spectator to Sir Roger de Coverly) that much may be said on both sides.

"You hope all are well at Porters: my companions, I thank God, are promisingly so. As to myself—read the last line of the last page but one, in the third volume of Stavorinus' Appendix, and you

will judge whether I have not fair cause to speak of myself as of my companions, able as I am to hobble about my house and near grounds for half an hour together in a morning—though going of seventy-four."

The next letter, and the last, is purely domestic:—

"20th July 1799.

"We have had as much pleasure as we are capable of receiving, in the very satisfactory information your letter of the 17th contains. And I flatter myself the circumstance may be deemed a reasonable assurance, that you will not cease to be remembered in your absence, should any reason occur for looking farther eastward, whilst you are settled first on that side of our meridian.

"We are at present a little uncomfortable here with the late accounts from Lady Altamont, who appears to be more seriously out of order than she, if conscious of it, will acknowledge, and Lord Altamont can believe. The little confidence we have in the skill of the Dublin physicians (become questionable by the nature of their prescriptions, and the little apparent benefit they have yet produced) has made so great an impression on Mary, that I could not but acquiesce in her desire for going over to Ireland, in the hope she entertains of being able to prevail on her sister to return to this country, for advising with a physician better acquainted with her constitution.

"I am conscious how natural it is, in absence, to indulge fears which, being present with the interesting party, we might see there is no cause to entertain, but which are not to be quieted without ocular conviction. Under these circumstances, therefore, Mary must be suffered to undertake this journey alone, as I am incapable of attending her, in case no better accounts are received before she begins her journey.

"You complained some time since, that weakened sight rendered it difficult for you to mend your own pens. When *your hand-writing* appears to you to need correctness, what is to be said of mine, in which I find I often add a stroke too much, or omit a letter, from indistinctness of vision, by not adhering to the just focal distance of my spectacles, for want of attention to a due upright position in this employment.

"Yours ever,

(Signed) "HOWE."

Whatever the noble Earl may have thought of his hand-writing, it is a fact that, on comparing the earliest of his four hundred letters with the last, embracing a period of twenty-three years, if there be a difference at all, it is in favour of the latter ones—a proof that the hand, at least, was free from gout, though the lower extremities of the frame were by this time, after repeated attacks, rendered almost useless. By the advice of Dr. Warren, so long as he lived, and afterwards that of Dr. Pitcairn, until

the latter was compelled to go to Lisbon for the benefit of his health, he had been enabled, at least he thought so, to soften the severity of the gouty attacks. Being thus deprived of the assistance and advice of these two able physicians, and feeling the rigour of the disorder increasing, he was prevailed upon to try the effect of electricity, which at that time was creeping into fashion as a remedy for all manner of diseases. He left Porters for that purpose, and came up to Grafton-street, where he placed himself under the care of the practitioner most in fashion. After a few trials, however, the gout was supposed to have been driven to the head, and with such severity that he sunk rapidly under it, and expired on the 5th of August 1799. His remains were removed for interment to the family vault in Nottinghamshire; the burial being conducted in the same private and unostentatious manner in which he had lived, free from pomp or parade. The inscription on the plate of his coffin, which was of stout English oak,—emblem of the heart it enclosed,—was simply as under:—

RICHARD HOWE,
Earl and Viscount Howe,
Viscount Howe, and Baron Clenawley, in Ireland,
Admiral of the Fleet,
General of his Majesty's Marine Forces, and
Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter,
Died 5th of August
1799,
Aged 73 Years.

His Lordship having died without male issue, his Irish honours descended to his brother the General Sir Wm. Howe; the English titles of earl and viscount were extinct. His eldest daughter, Charlotte-Sophia, and her heirs-male, claimed the English barony; and from her is descended the present Earl Howe, grandson to the admiral, who had been raised to the earldom in 1788; his grandson in 1821. The baroness was married to Mr. Penn-Assheton Curzon, eldest son of Viscount Curzon; and on his death, a second time to Sir Jonathan Wathen Waller, Bart. Louisa-Catherine, the youngest daughter of the admiral, married Lord Altamont, of Westport, Ireland, afterwards created Marquis of Sligo, whom she survived, and married a second time Sir William Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell.

On the 3rd of October 1799, Mr. Dundas, on proposing a monument to be erected to the memory of Earl Howe, pronounced, in the House of Commons, the following eulogium:—"Sir, it is my intention to lay before the house a motion upon which I do not think it necessary to say many words. I am persuaded I am not singular in the feelings I entertain in consequence of the lamented death of the late Earl Howe. There can be but one unanimous sentiment pervading the country as to the propriety of not suffering that noble lord to go out of the world without publicly testifying the regard due to his memory. On various occasions his Majesty,

with the concurrence of this house, has shown his regard for eminent services by individuals; and whenever his Majesty has thought proper to distinguish any one by conferring exalted honour on him for the services rendered the country, this house has never failed to interpose and second the intentions of his Majesty, by conferring a substantial and honourable pecuniary reward. In the present case, however, no consideration of that kind has occurred: the noble lord, by his own merit, was advanced to a seat in the other house; and from the situation of his family there was no occasion to remunerate him in a pecuniary point of view. There therefore only remains one way by which the house can manifest its sense of his services, and that is, by the erection of a monument to his memory. To his respectable family it will afford a considerable degree of consolation, for the loss they have sustained by being thus deprived of their head, to find that his merits have not been forgotten by his country. To the public it is of importance to keep alive the remembrance of the brilliant services by great and eminent characters. To every generous mind it is of importance that such services should be distinguished, as there is nothing that can more stimulate to the performance of brilliant actions than the certainty of having them recorded to posterity. On these grounds, without any further observation, I shall move, That an humble address be presented to

his Majesty, praying that his Majesty will be graciously pleased to give directions for the erection of a monument in the Cathedral of St. Paul's to the memory of Admiral Earl Howe, with an inscription expressive of the eminent services rendered to his country, in the course of his long and laborious life, and particularly by the important service performed by his brilliant and decisive victory over the French fleet on the 1st of June 1794."

A splendid monument was accordingly erected in St. Paul's, from a design by Flaxman—a full length figure of the Earl, finely proportioned; behind the right shoulder sits Minerva, holding a trident; near his left foot a lion *couchant;* Clio, the Muse of History, writing (while a sister Muse looks on)—"*Gibraltar relieved, October* 11, 1782—*The French fleet defeated, June* ——." On the front of the platform on which Minerva appears on the right, and the prow of the Queen Charlotte on the left, of the Earl, is the following inscription:—

"Erected at the public expense to the Memory of
ADMIRAL EARL HOWE,
In testimony of the general sense of his great and meritorious services,
In the course of a long and distinguished life, and in particular
For the benefit derived to his country, by the brilliant
Victory which he obtained
Over the French fleet, off Ushant, the 1st of June 1794.
He was born 19th of March 1726,* and died 5th of August 1799,
In his 74th year."

To his widow, the countess, and his unmarried

* The family date his birth in 1725.

and interesting daughter, Lady Mary, it would be superfluous to say that the loss of so good and amiable a husband and father was irreparable, and most severely felt. It appears indeed to have preyed so deeply on their spirits and health, as to lead to the conclusion by their friends that the consequence would be, in all human probability, to shorten their lives. The consolations they received in their affliction, from the several branches of the Royal Family, must have been most gratifying and soothing under the severe loss they had sustained. The Queen and Princesses paid them a visit at Porters Lodge; and if any alleviation could be communicated, under their melancholy privation, the following beautiful letter from that good and gracious King, George III., addressed to the sister of the deceased earl, must have had that effect.

Letter from the King to Mrs. Howe, on the death of Earl Howe :—

"Weymouth, September 2nd, 1799.

"I trust Mrs. Howe knows me better than to suppose my long silence, on the great loss the public has sustained as well as her family by the unexpected death of her excellent brother, has been occasioned by any other motive than the desire not to intrude, while she was so fully employed in acts of attentive kindness to her relations, who must have found much comfort from such attention. I trust the example he has set to the navy will long continue to stimulate,

not only the matchless bravery of the officers, but convince them of the necessity to view the profession in a scientific light, by which alone those improvements are to be acquired, which will retain that superiority over other nations which every Englishman must desire.

"His exemplary conduct in private life must, on the present melancholy occasion, be the only true comfort to those who loved him, as it gives that hope of his having quitted this transient world for eternal happiness, through the mediation of our blessed Redeemer. If I did not feel the propriety of not adding more on so glorious a theme, my pen would but too willingly continue.

"The family, I find, are removed to Porters Lodge; the first moments there were of fresh sorrow, but I trust that the quietness of the place and the good air will be of use. I fear Mrs. Howe does not now render that justice to air she formerly did; but if she was here, and saw how well it agrees with her *little* friend, and how much she *hops* about, I think she could not deny it has some efficacy.

(Signed) "GEORGE R."

To this letter the following is the answer of Mrs. Howe:—

"September 3, 1799.

"Mrs. Howe can give no other answer to her most gracious Sovereign than tears of sensibility

and gratitude; the constant approbation of your Majesty, during his life, is the highest eulogium that could be written upon Earl Howe's tomb; and his family must always feel comfort from that, and for the honour your Majesty is pleased to confer upon his memory. His loss to his family is undoubtedly irreparable, but Mrs. Howe can truly say, she should still more mourn his death, had his health been such as to have given hope he could have continued to prove his duty to his King, by further actions which might have been beneficial to his country.

"Mrs. Howe rejoices in the mended health of the Princess Amelia; she prays that it may soon be perfected, and that every blessing, which affection and duty can wish, may now and ever attend your Majesty and your august family."

The kind attention to the family of the late Earl Howe was not confined to the King alone; the Prince of Wales addressed the following letter to Mrs. Howe, on the death of her brother:—

"My dear Mrs. Howe,—I called to inquire after you and after Lady Howe, and am sorry you have not been so good as to say just how you do. It was far from my intention, I assure you, to intrude, having nothing to say but to offer my regrets at what your whole family has to suffer, especially as it is the height of folly to pretend to offer, under such circumstances, anything in the shape of comfort. I

hope you are as well as can be expected, and that you will allow me just to justify myself, as I pass through London the end of the ensuing week, for no one can have a more sincere regard or greater respect for you, than

"Your very sincere friend,

(Signed) "GEORGE P.

"Windsor Castle, August 10, 1799."

The uninterrupted correspondence that had been kept up, for so many years, between the noble earl and Sir Roger Curtis, was continued with the latter by the remaining females of the family; and from it may be collected some interesting particulars regarding their situation and feelings. On the 14th of January 1800, the countess, in a letter from Porters, says,—

"My Mary and I have been here for four months; Charlotte and Louisa stayed with me till about a month ago, when Louisa returned to Ireland, and Charlotte to Lord Curzon's. I purpose staying here a month longer, as Mary and myself find the quiet more suited to our present unhappy situation, than what the world would call amusing our thoughts, which, God knows, is not in the power of the world to do. My children are, I thank the Almighty, all well, and in every instance the most affectionate children any mother was ever blessed with.

"By the English papers you will see the vote in

parliament for the monument in St. Paul's. I think it will instantly strike you, as it did me, to wish they had given less mortification during that dear object's life, than to cover their ill-conduct to him by this outward show of respect to his memory; but this is a subject I must not get upon.

"You will like to know that nothing can have been more strongly *marked* than the King's affection and regrets; the Queen came over to me here, as soon as she returned from Weymouth; and the King ordered my daughters to see him first in private, 'as less painful to them and to himself.' But I must stop writing; this is a subject I could for ever dwell upon, but it will be painful to you and hurtful to me. I will only add, God bless you with health.

"Yours, &c.

"M. Howe."

In a postcript, Lady Mary says,—"I have begged her letter from my mother, supposing you would like a line also from me—what sad substitutes for what you have been accustomed to receive from this house! Your letter, though pleasant, has brought on a gush of sorrow which I fear will long be produced by everything *pleasant* formerly *shared in*—but I do not know what I am running into; I wanted to tell you more than my beloved mother has said about herself. I would flatter myself she has no positive

complaint, but she is thinner and more altered than imagination could suppose, but not more than those who have known the interior of this family will easily comprehend."

On the 28th of February 1800, the countess writes thus:—"Nothing that is interesting to me or my family will ever be indifferent to you; I therefore take the first moment to tell you my beloved Mary is soon to go from under my protection to that of Lord Morton's. My first object is, that I have every reason to think it is a connection that would not have been objected to by the ever to be lamented dear friend I have lost. It is a source of much comfort to me to reflect I shall leave her under the protection of a man of honour and of principle, which, in my present precarious state of health, is a great consolation to me."

A few weeks after this, Mrs. Howe makes the following mournful communication, dated 10th of April 1800:—"It now again falls to me to acquaint you with an event you will most heavily feel: Lady Mary, who was to have married Lord Morton in a few weeks, the man of her choice, and with the highest approbation of all her friends, and of all who loved her—and who, ever acquainted with that most perfect of human beings, did not love and adore her?—was seized by a violent fever (which had been coming on some days) and took to her bed on Sunday evening, the 30th of March; and yesterday,

the 9th of April, we lost her. Lady Howe is overwhelmed in sorrow, and, in her state of health, I think the worst is to be feared. Lord Howe is in the utmost grief; the Baroness Howe keeps herself up, to be of use to her mother, but suffers most heavily;—but I need not add more on this sad, very sad subject."

The sudden and unexpected death of this amiable and accomplished young lady, at a moment when the bright prospect of happiness was full before her, calls forth the sympathy and affectionate regard of the good old King, who thus addresses her aunt, Mrs. Howe, on this melancholy occasion, in a strain of piety that reflects honour on the memory of this excellent sovereign:—

"Queen's House, April 9, 1800.

"The King would not for one moment have diverted Mrs. Howe from her heroic efforts to support Countess Howe, on the fresh severe affliction she has met with, but from the strong desire he has that, on the first proper occasion, she will express, in his name, to the countess, how sincerely he participates in her grief; it is impossible to have known the truly angelic mind now departed and be insensible to the feelings of the excellent mother. The King trusts that the true confidence the countess has always placed in Divine Providence will be her true stay on this most trying occasion, and that both she and the Baroness Howe will not too strongly

struggle against the real feelings of nature: tears are the necessary indulgence on such an occasion; and Divine Providence certainly cannot blame humanity for giving way to what alone, in the first moments, can give ease; the mind must have obtained some calm before the only true assistant, religion, can give its real aid; my mind is so full I could add much more, but stop on reflecting that I am detaining Mrs. Howe, whose good sense and singular resolution are necessarily employed in supporting the mother and daughter.

(Signed) "GEORGE R."

Mrs. Howe gives a melancholy account of the countess and family:—"Lady Altamont," she says, "came over from Ireland directly to her mother, and neither she, nor the baroness, nor Lord Morton, have ever been many hours together without being with her: my accounts from Porters Lodge are, that she sleeps better for the air, and that upon the whole there is a trifle of amendment; but that she can ever feel happiness in this world again is not to be expected, but time, of course, will bring composure and resignation."—But, alas! the shaft of death had penetrated the heart. "On the 9th of August 1800," says Mrs. Howe, "she was released from a year of sad sorrow, but her death was an easy one. Her two affectionate and dutiful daughters never left her till the last scene was closed." In writing to Sir

Roger Curtis, Mrs. Howe says, "The countess desired a keepsake she named might be presented to you. It is a very fine seal, engraved upon a topaz, and will have an additional value to you, by having once belonged to your angelic friend Lady Mary."

The kind and considerate King, on hearing the death of the countess, again addresses Mrs. Howe:—

"Weymouth, August 10, 1800.

"Mrs. Howe's constant exertions to be useful to her relations must be fully employed at the present moment, in supporting Ladies Altamont and Howe in their scene of sorrow; yet I could not refrain from wishing she would, at a proper time, express to them how sincerely I sympathize with them on the present melancholy occasion. It is impossible for any one who saw how deeply the late countess's heart was affected, as well as the weakness to which her frame was reduced, could look on her exit but as a release; and I am certain the great fatigue her daughters have, in the most exemplary manner, undergone, must have proved fatal to them if of much longer duration.

"They have most scrupulously fulfilled their duty to a most kind parent, but that towards their children must make them now attend to their own health, which I hope, by due care, may soon be re-established.

(Signed) "GEORGE R."

On the same day, and on the same occasion, the Prince of Wales writes to Mrs. Howe as follows:—

"Brighton, August 10, 1800.

"DEAR MRS. HOWE,—Among the many inquiries after you upon the late melancholy event in your family, there will be none that you will receive more sincere, I trust, than those you will receive from my pen. The fortitude of your mind, and your own excellent understanding, are such strong supports, even under the greatest calamities, that I should flatter myself that your health would suffer but little injury, though upon this very trying occasion.

"I do not mean to trespass long upon you, especially at this moment, but when you are sufficiently at your leisure, I shall truly rejoice at having a line from you to inform me that you are as well as all your friends can wish you to be. Adieu! my dearest Madam, and believe me

"Ever your very sincere
"And affectionate friend,
"GEORGE P."

The affectionate regard thus evinced by the King and the Prince of Wales, and the concern they express at the domestic afflictions of Earl Howe's surviving family, lead to the conclusion that a much more extended epistolary intercourse must have sub-

sisted, between the Royal Family and Mrs. Howe, than the few letters now supplied on the melancholy occasions to which they refer, and which may be considered as brands snatched from the fire. The good old King, indeed, would appear to have been so constant a correspondent of Mrs. Howe, that he communicates to her what personally and nearly concerns himself—the progress he is making from a state of blindness to the restoration of his sight. This information is addressed to her, in a note scarcely legible, and written evidently while vision was yet very imperfect:—

"Royal Sovereign, off Portland, July 1805.

"The King takes up his pen to acquaint Mrs. Howe that he certainly sees better than he did some days past, and begins to flatter himself that with time he shall regain perfect sight.

(Signed) "GEORGE R."

How much of the familiar and domestic correspondence of the Howe family perished in the flames, that consumed the library at Westport, no conjecture can be formed, nor does any account of it appear to exist; but as the Marchioness of Sligo was appointed executrix of Mrs. Howe's affairs, as well as those of the Earl Howe; it is more than probable that all her papers shared the same fate as the rest; and being a lady of very extensive acquaintance, and her house the resort of the first personages in the

kingdom, and of men distinguished for literary and scientific acquirements, it can scarcely be doubted that much curious and valuable correspondence has perished on the unfortunate occasion, and very likely many letters from her brother, the Earl, in the early part of his career, of which, as coming from himself, we literally know nothing; much must undoubtedly still remain in private hands, and it is to be hoped may yet see the light.

CHAPTER XII.

MISCELLANEOUS TRAITS OF CHARACTER.

General observations—Howe and Wolfe—Howe's bravery and coolness never disputed—Comparative instance of the latter—His person, features, and manners described—Erroneous character of him by the Americans—His humane and benevolent character exemplified—His generosity—His good nature, in a long instruction to Captain Fanshawe, how to conduct himself at Court—His kindness to young officers—Interesting account given by Sir Robert Barlow in consequence of this—Free from anger or resentment—The word *blockhead* the strongest of reproach in four hundred letters—Irritating conduct of Lord Bridport borne with calmness—A solitary quarrel with, and challenge to, Captain Lord Harvey—Full apology of the latter—Howe's readiness to bestow praise on naval officers—On frigate captains not rewarded—Instances of his attention to naval science—His domestic circle—Howe, St. Vincent, and Nelson, the three greatest naval officers of their times—Their characters compared—Brief summary of that of Earl Howe.

AFTER what has been depicted in the preceding pages, to repeat the various deeds of valour by which the professional life of Howe was distinguished, would be a thankless and unprofitable labour; it is enough to observe, that he never failed in the execution of his purpose, where he had the direction and command. His moral character was unimpeachable, and not less worthy of admiration than the glory of his military career; so that it may

be truly said of him, as of the Chevalier Bayard—he lived *sans peur et sans reproche*. A love of enterprise, and gallant bearing, are so prevalent in the naval service of Great Britain, and so common to naval officers of every rank, that they almost cease to be a distinction; though they are frequently brought into action under different aspects, according to the genius and temperament of individuals—with coolness, firmness, and systematic arrangement, as in the case of Earl Howe—with eagerness and ardour, and a total disregard of danger and of life, as in that of Viscount Nelson. The French pilot in Basque Roads preferred Howe to all others in the squadron —*parcequ'il etait jeune et brave*. He no doubt judged rightly in giving the preference to youth and valour, the effects of which he had experienced in the person of Howe, when he placed the Magnanime under the walls of Isle d'Aix. If Howe and Wolfe had commanded on this occasion in Basque Roads, instead of Knowles and Mordaunt, they would no doubt have succeeded where these great officers failed; of the same age, the same comparative rank, and engaged on the same enterprize, "they contracted a friendship," as Walpole says, "like the union of cannon and gunpowder;" it was an union of sentiment, founded on mutual greatness of soul, love of their king and country, and contempt of danger. There is meaning in the metaphor—Howe, strong in mind, solid in judgment, firm of purpose—

is the cannon; the gunpowder is Wolfe—quick in conception, prompt in execution, impetuous in action.

> "Wolfe, where'er he fought,
> Put so much of his heart into his act,
> That his example had a magnet's force,
> And all were swift to follow whom all loved."

Of Howe's military character, therefore, as far as undaunted bravery is concerned, nothing further than what has been stated need be advanced. Sir Robert Barlow says, "He was no less remarkable for patient endurance under adverse events, than for his personal bravery in all situations, and no man had a higher sense of honour." Of his coolness in moments of danger, instances have also been given. One more may here be added, to shew how very differently the feelings of officers in this respect are acted upon, though equally brave in the face of an enemy: it is furnished by a gallant admiral, who served with both officers to whom it relates.

When Howe was in command of the Channel fleet, after a dark and boisterous night, in which the ships had been in some danger of running foul of each other, Lord Gardner, then third in command, the next day went on board the Queen Charlotte, and inquired of Lord Howe how he had slept, for that he himself had not been able to get any rest from anxiety of mind. Lord Howe said he had slept perfectly well, for as he had taken every possible precaution he could before dark, he laid him-

self down with a conscious feeling that everything had been done, which it was in his power to do, for the safety of the ship, and the lives of those intrusted to his care, and this conviction set his mind at ease. Lord Gardner, one of the best and bravest of men, and a thorough seaman, was always nervous and anxious, except when in presence of an enemy, when his energy and bravery overpowered every other solicitude. The extraordinary difference of feeling between Howe and Gardner is further exemplified by an anecdote of the latter, told by Admiral Sir James Whitshed, who commanded the Alligator, and was next to him in the line. Such was Gardner's anxiety, even in ordinary weather that, though each ship carried three poop-lanterns, he had always one kept burning in his cabin, and when he thought the Alligator was approaching too near, he used to run out into the stern-gallery with the lantern in his hand, waving it so as to be noticed.

The person of Lord Howe is said to have been tall and well proportioned; his countenance of a serious cast, strongly marked, and dark; at the same time there was a shyness and awkwardness in his manner, which to a stranger at first sight gave rather an unfavourable impression; that, however, is said to have soon worn off; and the expression of his features to have assumed a very different and an animated character, assuming that benign aspect which corresponded with his disposition. "His person," says Sir

Robert Barlow, who knew him well, "was perfectly well formed, and his countenance, though perhaps at first sight somewhat harsh, softened into a most gracious smile occasionally, and was expressive of that kindness and benevolence, which distinguished him as a husband, a father, and a friend."

The Americans, that is to say the loyalists, or, as they called themselves, refugees, abused Lord Howe in all the papers and pamphlets of the day, because he refused their solicitations to grant them letters of marque to cruize against the rebels—"sternly," says one writer, "replying, will you never have done oppressing these poor people? Will you never give them an opportunity of seeing their error?" This portion of the population wished him to carry fire and sword into all the towns and villages along the whole line of coast, that had not submitted to the King's government; but Howe had come to America for a very opposite and beneficent purpose. They had heard of his bravery, but could not comprehend that true valour and humanity are always allied; that *he* is the real hero who knows how to temper conquest with mercy; to subdue an enemy by kindness; and avoid, as far as possible, the shedding of blood, either of his own people or of his opponents, finally obtaining a victory with the least sacrifice of human beings. This was the feeling that actuated Howe in America; and his forbearance procured him abundance of abuse. "He thinks himself," says

the same writer, "equal to everything; he communicates with none but his brother; their measures are purely their own; in making him a politician, they have put him quite out of his latitude;" and after a great deal of opprobrious language, makes the admission that, "after all, as a man, he is deservedly esteemed. His moral character is unimpeachable in every respect: he is quite the contrast of a certain person; and in the naval line, he has not a superior. The bravest man could not wish for a more able, or more gallant commander."

Another writer, who takes a review of the war, in speaking of the two brothers, says, "They had in common the sullen family gloom: in one thing they differed; Sir William hated business, and never did any; my Lord loved business, dwelt upon it, and never could leave or end it. Their uniform character through life has been, and is to this day, haughty, morose, hard-hearted, and inflexible."

This, from an enemy, utterly unacquainted with Lord Howe's character, may be held excusable; or even from a disappointed friend, had it been true; but it is in every respect the reverse of truth: instead of being "morose" or sullen, his temper was of the most placid kind; his manner, it is true, was reserved, but had no tinge of "haughtiness;" and so far from being "hard-hearted," there never existed a more kind-hearted and humane man than Lord Howe. This may be fearlessly affirmed; but that

one assertion may not be taken as proof against another of a contrary tendency, a few instances in point may be offered, in addition to those already given, to substantiate the favourable traits of his moral character. It may however be observed, in passing, that a haughty and hard-hearted man would not have shed tears of gratitude, when the brave fellows of the 1st of June came aft to return their gallant commander their thanks for having led them to victory—a haughty and hard-hearted man would not have condescended to exercise that humane disposition, which we are assured by his own secretary he was accustomed to do—"by going down below after an action, and talking to every wounded man, sitting by the sides of their cradles, and constantly ordering his live-stock and wines to be applied to their use, at the discretion of the surgeon, and at all times for the sick on board." It was by such acts as these, and many other little kindnesses and indulgences shewn to his men, that he obtained the appellation of "the sailor's friend."

The anecdote that has been given of the introduction of the Nottingham lad into the service, at his own charge and expense, and the trouble he took on his account, at a time when suffering under the infliction of gout, bespeaks a kind and compassionate heart. It did not stop here: pleased with the lad's conduct, he says, "Having had a letter from Duffty, with good assurances of his assiduity, I trouble you with a

note for him, to convey my confidence in the permanency of his commendable exertions. I believe I shall adopt the lad as my future representative, if he perseveres in meriting the favourable reports you make of his behaviour." Numerous instances appear in his correspondence of his readiness to assist humble merit, or to perform some act of beneficence. Of this kind, the following may be taken as an instance:—"I have still," he says to his correspondent, "another commission for you. I have lately received a letter from the two Miss Saunders, resident in High-street-road, Portsmouth, as their letter specifies. They are the daughters of a Captain Saunders of the 29th Regiment, killed in the Brunswick in 1794. I think you are not quite a stranger to the particulars of their melancholy situation. In consequence of their memorial to the King for some provision to be made for them, they were placed upon what is termed the Compassionate List; a charity connected, I believe, with the War Department. The greatest amount that fund can afford is only 18*l.*, to be annually divided between them. It appears to me they would not have been improper objects for the Maritime Pension List; but, alas! I have met with such contemptuous treatment from the principals in that department, that I should be incapable of promoting the object, were anything attempted in that line; and now the scanty provision even they have obtained on the former establishment, would militate

against their admission upon the other. I therefore request you will be the instrument for having 20*l.* conveyed to them, and I will take care to have it replaced here in any manner I am directed."

This is but one case of a multitude which might be quoted. He was generous in the extreme; and his example affords perhaps the only instance on record of a commander-in-chief giving up his share of prize-money for the benefit of the officers and men of the fleet. When, in 1798, the Bank was empowered to receive voluntary contributions for defraying the expenses of the war, the Noble Earl, then confined to his bed, commissioned the Countess to receive his annual pay of General of Marines (1800*l.*), in which was included his Admiral's half-pay, and take it to the Bank as his contribution—the only emolument of any description he received from the public. His private charities were extensive.

His never-ceasing kindness in providing for all those who had been in his service; the donations he orders to be paid to those whom he has been unable to provide for; the deep interest he takes in all the officers who served under him, and his constant anxiety, more particularly for that gallant officer Sir Andrew Snape Douglas, who suffered severely, for three years previous to his death, from the wound he received in his head in the battle of the 1st of June, are so many proofs of his charitable and considerate disposition.

The kind feeling, so truly characteristic of his

habitual good nature, is strongly manifested in the following long letter, which he took the trouble to write to Captain Fanshawe, an officer just returned from the West Indies after a gallant action, in which the Monmouth he had commanded was almost shattered to pieces; the task of writing it is the more remarkable, the subject appearing, as the Noble Lord himself observes, "trifling." He had addressed a complimentary letter to Captain Fanshawe on the gallant exploit he had performed, in which he says, "I have not heard that you were presented to the King upon your return to England. Your happy fortune (for you will be offended if I say your merit) gives you, in my opinion, such a just title to that customary pretension, that I cannot refrain from recommending it to your consideration, whether you should not make it the particular purpose of a journey to town." A fortnight after, he writes the following:—

"Grafton-street, 1st February, 1780.

"Dear Sir,—As in your favour of the 23rd instant you do not name any fixed time for being in town, and that as I propose going to Bath some time in the next week, for a stay of three weeks or a month, whereby it may happen that I shall not be here when you come to town, I venture to recommend some little attentions to your notice which, however trifling they may appear in other respects, are not equally immaterial within the limits of the

Court, if you determine upon going there at that time. Perhaps such intimations may be unnecessary, but I am persuaded the motive for offering them will, in your goodness, excuse the impropriety.

"The customs of the Court require, that you should acquaint the Lord of the Bedchamber *in waiting* with your desire of being presented to the King. This is most conveniently done (though any person names or introduces you to the Lord in Waiting) by giving your name to him, written on a card, with the addition of your being '*late captain of the Monmouth.*' Such a notification of your character accommodates the King in the choice of a subject, on which he may wish to speak to you, when you have been presented. It is possible he may ask you 'how long you have been in town, or of the purpose that brings you up out of the country?' If questions of this sort, giving you an opportunity to speak without impropriety on the occasion, should offer, it appears to me very consistent for you to speak of the cause of your coming to town, as being 'to pay your duty to his Majesty, which you had been prevented from doing upon your first arrival in England, by particular business that required your presence with your family immediately.' If you see a fit occasion to speak of the *stay* you purpose to make in town (another question not unlikely to be asked of you), your letters, offering your service at the Admiralty, suggest a very suitable answer in the

declaration that 'you proposed staying now in town only until you should be able to inform yourself, whether the tender you had *some time since* presumed to make of your humble services again at sea, would procure for you the honour of being appointed to another ship, the Monmouth having been paid off on her return to England.' I have mentioned these heads of conversation only, as in their relation to the claims of the King's notice, which your adventures abroad have given you. I am assured they would be the last that would occur, on such an occasion, to yourself—and I am with the greatest esteem,

"Yours, &c.

"HOWE."

The above letter is curious in another respect, by bringing us back to the days of George the Third, when the people did not flock in crowds to his levees as of late years, and when the good old King walked round the circle and held conversation individually with his visiters.

Lord Howe was strongly averse from the system of striking officers' names off the list, and was of opinion that the law ought to be altered to admit of their cases being inquired into by a court, composed of their brother officers; he reprobated a custom, then prevalent in the navy, of dismissing midshipmen with very little ceremony for the first, and perhaps trifling, offence, and said, if it was not of too grave a nature, he should always be disposed to give them a second

trial, with an admonition and a caution to be more circumspect in future. Numbers of instances of this forbearance and good nature might here be noticed, but there is one of a peculiar character more particularly deserving of being brought forward, which, though not the immediate act of Lord Howe, was the result of his opinion on this subject. At a private dinner party, his Lordship took occasion to express his sentiments strongly on this point, and said it would be inhuman, and was not justifiable, to condemn and to consign to ruin a young person for shewing symptoms of "infirmity," (or shyness,) on being for the first time engaged in battle; and he quoted an instance in which he had rescued a young man from obloquy and destruction to all his future prospects, who afterwards proved himself a brave and good officer. Sir Robert Barlow, who was present, says, "this made an impression on my mind which many years afterwards influenced my conduct on a similar and rather an interesting occasion." The following is Sir Robert's letter on that subject:—

"In the first action in the Phœbe, under my command, when she captured the French frigate Nereïde, one of my young mids was accused by his shipmates of having behaved in a cowardly manner. I however silenced them by the strong hand of power, and we heard no more of it: but, about two years afterwards, when we were coming up with the

French frigate Africaine, which also we had the good fortune to capture, the same youth came to me and said, 'Sir, you have not forgotten what passed after the capture of the Nereïde. I trust I shall, on the occasion about to take place, convince you that the reports to my disadvantage then were groundless.'

"However strange it may appear, the Africaine was no sooner captured than reports were in circulation unfavourable to the youth in question, and they went so far as to affirm that, having received an order from one, which he was to deliver to the officer on the forecastle, he stopt short and took shelter behind the capstern. It was a night action, and so dark, that the accusation could not be satisfactorily substantiated; and with no little trouble and exertion of authority, I once more stifled the report, and placed him on good terms with his comrades, encouraged and justified (as I felt) by the recollection strong in my memory of the sentiment of my revered patron and friend Lord Howe, by which a brave and honourable man was saved from disgrace and ruin, as will be seen in the sequel.

"I had occasion some time after to send this youth to England for the recovery of his health; and the war being renewed in 1803, he went to the West Indies, where he proved himself to be quite a hero, boarding and cutting out the enemy's vessels (the most perilous of our services), and receiving several

dangerous wounds. He returned home in 1805 with such a character for gallant bearing, as induced a fair lady, the sister of a noble earl who has since held the first office under the Crown, to accept his proposal, and to become his wife. He was by this time a captain, and having fitted out a fine frigate at Deptford, was sent to cruize off the coast of Norway, where, having chased and followed a vessel within the island rocks with which that coast abounds, a gun-boat came out and fired (as I have been informed) only *one* shot at the frigate, which killed the captain and a person standing near him. Her ladyship married a second husband, and is since dead.

(Signed) "ROBERT BARLOW.

"P. S. For obvious reasons I do not give names.*"

Not only was the disposition of Lord Howe of the most kindly nature, but he divested himself in a remarkable manner of every approach to a state of anger or resentment, and carefully abstained from all irritating language, whether in speaking or writing. In the perusal of the four hundred letters and upwards that have been mentioned, embracing opinions of, and unreserved discussions upon, the merits or otherwise of many and various characters

* The parties herein alluded to are not difficult to be discovered The officer was Captain Bettesworth, who married Lady Hannah Althea, sister to Earl Grey, who was afterwards married to Mr. Edward Ellice, M. P. for Coventry.

of all classes of individuals, it did not fail forcibly to strike the reader of them, how invariably, with one single exception, he takes the good-natured and favourable side of every question; and that in the whole series, the harshest word employed is, *blockhead*, bestowed on his steward for not taking care of his own interests. Indeed, the sentiments these letters express, the feelings they display, the remarks and observations on the various subjects they embrace and, above all, the friendly and favourable tone in which they speak of his contemporary brother-officers, unmixed with the least tinge of prejudice or jealousy, are highly honourable to his character as a man and a true hero.

The exception alluded to applies to Sir Alexander Hood, afterwards Lord Bridport, whose conduct was, to say the least, in the relative situations of the two parties, foolish, mean, and highly reprehensible. Lord Howe was the very last man against whom such conduct ought to have been exhibited. The first complaint of Lord Howe appears in a letter to Sir Roger Curtis of the 16th of July 1794, Sir Alexander being then second in command, under him, of the Western Squadron. He says, "I wrote to Sir Alexander Hood an official letter, some days since, for a return to be sent to me of the first and second lieutenants in the Royal George on the 1st of June, and senior lieutenants of each of the other line-of-battle ships, (including the second in

the Brunswick,) for being sent to the Admiralty in view to their preferment; but have not yet received either acknowledgment of the letter or the list required. The readiest means for terminating that business will therefore be, I imagine, by giving you the trouble to order such a return to be prepared and sent to me." Nothing more appears till July the 9th 1795, when Lord Howe says, "I have not only not received a line from the Admiral since he went from Spithead, but have never been informed by himself that he had received his sailing orders. Whether this omission proceeds from interesting occurrences engaging his attention, or inadvertency, I cannot judge; but I supposed he could not be unapprised that a report of his proceedings should be made to the authority, from which his line of conduct was marked out to him, as well as to the Admiralty."

This pointed disrespect was continued with pertinacious consistency; for on the 24th of September 1795, Lord Howe writes from Porters thus:—"You say the Admiral is not in the best temper: his head I think is turned with the conceit of his important services. I have the most absurd official letter from him I ever read, in answer to an intimation that he had not acknowledged the receipt of his sailing orders. It is not an unpleasant incident, as it furnishes me with a just plea for declining to serve with him, if again required to resume my former situation. And, indeed, it will be necessary to profit by the opportunity, in case we were to be concerned in the

conduct of a large fleet, when much special exertion would be required from the second in command."

In another letter of the 29th of September, he says, "The state of Lord Bridport's reasoning faculties cannot, I think, be more *a travers* than in his doubts of your pretensions to a share in the profits of his captures. . . . . His conduct towards me has always been such, that I don't think he merits any more cordial attention from me. I am inclined to believe his displeasure to me is founded on a requisition made, whilst I presided at the Admiralty, for his paying in a part of the large balance of the Greenwich Hospital money then in his hands, instead of being obliged to make application for more to be issued from the Treasury, to answer the demands of the Hospital service."

Without pretending to any knowledge of Sir Alexander Hood's feelings or disposition, the fact may be taken as certain, that asking for money has dissolved many a friendship, and "killed" many a "heart." "You owe me money, Sir John, and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it." Lord Howe, it may be suspected, could have assigned another reason for his conduct. Lord Howe had laid Sir Alexander under the greatest obligation, by obtaining for him the command of a division in the fleet, sent out for the relief of Gibraltar, at a time when he was under a cloud, in consequence of the transaction concerning the log-book, when he commanded the Robust; and such a return as this is not altogether

an unusual way of manifesting a sense of gratitude for benefits conferred.

In another letter, of the 24th of October, Lord Howe sends Sir Roger a list of ships, which he tells him will remain under his direction, in the absence of a senior officer employed in the Channel fleet; and he adds, "Amongst those officers Lord Bridport is named; and for the present I don't propose making any formal objection to his continuance. But should it be necessary for me again to resume the command *at sea*, I shall be compelled to declare my total inability to serve again with him, after the receipt of such a letter as I formerly alluded to, but of which I then took no notice, as I hoped to be released from any further maritime charge of or concern with the fleet."

Lord Howe's mind had long been bent upon bringing to perfection a system of naval tactics, and the management of fleets by signals. On the 13th of January 1796, he says, "My instructions to divisional flag-officers of squadrons require the personal visitation and muster of the ships assigned to each. Lord Bridport, nevertheless, has always evaded the performance of such duty, *on plea of ill health;* and having intrusted it to flag-officers, he has taken such occasions to compliment them on their science and integrity. My remedy for that evasion (as I construe it) would have been by application to the Admiralty for the appointment of another assistant flag-

officer *in place of him*, whose state of health did not admit of his rendering me the assistance I required. Had I so done, the measure would have been deemed harsh, and was in fact less eligible as it regarded an institution of my own, not of the general superintending authority of the Board."

In March 1796 when, by the death of Admiral Forbes, Lord Howe became *Admiral of the Fleet*, and was also appointed *General of Marines*, the latter being a lucrative situation, in comparison with that of *Vice-Admiral of England*, which he was obliged to relinquish, and which, though merely honorary, he considered as superior in dignity. On this occasion he says, "I do not feel flattered by having that nominal superiority transferred to my junior, Lord Bridport, on whom it is to be bestowed; though I shall not regret his succession (if it shall so please the Fates) to the principal charge which he held last summer in a subordinate character."

There are very few instances on record in the life of Lord Howe, in which his temper appears to have been ruffled in the smallest degree; and with regard to the contemptuous conduct of Lord Bridport, who was under his immediate command, there are not many officers, placed in the situation of Lord Howe, that would have exercised as much forbearance under similar circumstances; but command of temper, or rather placidity of mind, was one great characteristic of the noble Earl. In the following

extract of a letter written by him in October 1795, his feelings are thus well expressed:—

"You say I shall *smile* at your declaration that 'you can command your own temper.'—No; I have a perfect knowledge of your sound understanding, and an equal conviction of your firmness to effect every practicable undertaking, in which you are determined to engage. Passion, or rather eagerness of character, in the sense we now mean is, in my opinion, the active principle; or, in Pope's beautiful words,

'Reason is the card, but passion is the gale.'

It is not the frailty of human nature, otherwise than as it governs us instead of being held by us in subjection; and I believe no man exists who has not found, under the last-mentioned circumstances, that his conduct has not always evinced his capacity to the best advantage, when the influence of passion hath been predominant. But enough of this has been said by a frail mortal, who has more of the weakness I would reprobate, than of the virtue which, in strong minds, is often seen to accompany it."

It is clear, from these extracts, that Lord Howe, by his naturally kind disposition, exercised great forbearance towards his subordinate officers; his whole life indeed afforded a proof how little he was disposed to take or to give offence. He was never known to have been involved in any personal quarrel, except on one occasion with Captain Lord

Harvey. The particulars of the dispute may probably have found their way into some of the periodical papers of that time. In a small volume of no reputation, called the "New Atalantis," is the following paragraph. Speaking of Lord Harvey, it is said,—"While Captain of the Raisonable, of 64 guns, the general tenor of his conduct was approved; but in one particular instance relative to his attack on Lord Howe, he certainly departed from his dignity, by suffering himself to be prevailed upon publicly to deny what he had as publicly asserted. His lordship [Harvey] was perfectly right in the outset of that unpleasant controversy, but the event cast a blot upon his professional character which cannot be easily done away."

The circumstance here alluded to, as stated from the recollection of a naval officer now living, is this: that Lord Harvey, who, though an excellent officer, was quite as fond of London society as of his ship, became exceedingly indignant when he found that the Raisonable was one of the ships of the squadron, which Lord Howe was ordered to send to the West Indies after the relief of Gibraltar, as being one in a state of the greatest efficiency. Lord Harvey took great offence at the selection thus made, and avenged himself by writing scurrilous letters, in which the conduct of Lord Howe was arraigned when in presence of the enemy in the Straits of Gibraltar, and in one of which he says, "if we had been led with

the same spirit with which we should have followed, it would have been a glorious day for England." On Lord Harvey's return to England, Lord Howe immediately called him out; and without the ceremony of exchanging explanations in writing, went at once to the ground, accompanied by Admiral Leveson Gower as his second. Lord Harvey took his Captain of Marines as his friend; and then and there fully retracted all his offensive expressions, and made an ample apology; preventing thus any expenditure of powder, shot, or life.

The man "undaunted as a rock," and who declared he "never knew what fear was," was not a man likely to want "spirit;" but when young foppish officers, ignorant of all the circumstances that govern the conduct of their superiors, take upon themselves to censure their conduct and proceedings, they scarcely deserve that a valuable life, as in the instance of Lord Howe, should be put in jeopardy, or in degrading competition with one that, in all probability, might be better spared. No man, as it has already been stated, was less disposed to be quarrelsome, none of a more forgiving disposition, or more ready to repair an unintentional injustice done to any one, or more ready to acknowledge it, than Lord Howe. "I find," says he, "that I have done an injustice to Christian (Sir Hugh) in supposing any admonitions necessary as to the arrangements of his ship's duties;" and he goes on to pay

a handsome compliment to his attention and foresight. Admiral Macbride, as an opposition member, had opposed and censured Howe in some debate in the House of Commons; but the noble lord was so much pleased with his zeal and energy displayed on service, that he says to Curtis, "Admiral Macbride's professional attentions cancel all recollection of his political hostility." Praise, and not censure, was most congenial with Lord Howe's disposition. The report of a successful battle, whether between fleets or single ships, is always sure to be mentioned in terms of approbation. "We had here, yesterday," he says, in one of his letters, "a very imperfect report of the very fortunate, interesting, and highly honourable event of Duncan's rencontre with the Dutch fleet." His estimate of Nelson's character appears from the following extract:—"If Nelson figures in the Mediterranean, as we have just reason to suppose, in case he gets sight of the Toulon armament, his ships will not be left in a state to keep the sea." This from Howe speaks volumes.

He takes frequent opportunities of giving all just credit to the abilities and exertions of frigate captains, who, he says, are the officers we are to look up to for commanding our ships of the line. Among these he enumerates, by name, Thornborough, Pellew, Strachan, Samuel Hood, Legge, Stopford, and Barlow; and expresses his disappointment that medals, or some distinctive mark of approbation, had

not been conferred on them. His unremitting attention to all that regarded the navy and the naval service, appears in a large portion of his correspondence, and has partially been noticed. He frequently laments the want of scientific acquirements in the great bulk of naval officers; and speaks with much humility of his own deficiency. We find however in his private journal, which commences with his expedition for the relief of Gibraltar—what is not to be found in any journal of a flag-officer of that day, and not in many since—a record of the state of the barometer, the thermometer, the strength and direction of the wind, and occasionally the longitude by the "time-keeper," as compared with that from computation. When George III., therefore, "trusted that the example set by Lord Howe to the navy will long continue to stimulate, not only the matchless bravery of the officers, but convince them of the necessity to view the profession in a scientific light," he well knew the character of the noble earl in this respect.

That character was in fact so firmly established that, when in command of the Magnanime, various inventions and supposed improvements were committed to his charge, for the purpose of making the necessary experiments to ascertain their utility. Among others, it appears, the Marine Chair of Mr. Irwin was submitted to his trial—a contrivance by means of which it was hoped that the altitudes and

angular distances of celestial bodies might be taken, as well as eclipses and occultations be readily observed at sea. It seems that not only Howe sat in the chair, but Prince Edward and Dr. Blair also; the latter of whom was so delighted with the facility he found in using the telescope, that he cried out aloud, "This will do! this will do!" Lord Howe certifies as under:—

"Magnanime, off Ushant, Aug. 11, 1759.

"On a further experiment of the Marine Chair, contrived by Mr. Irwin, I am of opinion that an observation of an emersion or immersion of Jupiter's satellites may be made in it at sea, not subject to a greater error than three minutes of time.

(Signed) "HOWE."

The unfortunate loss of the family correspondence deprives us of the clue that would have led to the development of Howe's domestic virtues, and of the happiness of all around him. The affliction caused by his death to every part of his family, and the melancholy consequences which so speedily followed that event, and which are so feelingly described in the few letters that have been saved, paint in vivid colours the sad change which could only be imagined by those who, as the amiable Lady Mary observes, "knew the inferior of this family." Sir Roger Curtis, who lived at his house when in town, says that his domestic circle was blessed with the happiest state of harmony; that his countess and daughters

looked on him with the most affectionate regard, indeed they almost idolized him; and that, although to a stranger he appeared to present a rough outside and a coldness of manner, it contained a warm heart. He was kind and attentive to all around him, and possessed an evenness and suavity of temper that put every one at ease in his company. He was indulgent to his servants, and, as in his ship he said he was a fop, so in his house, as far as regarded regularity and neatness in the clothing of his domestics, he was very particular. That clever person, Mrs. Howe, a woman of a masculine understanding, might almost be considered an inmate of the family, and a most important one. She lived in an adjoining house, internally communicating with that of her brother, who occupied the one, which the Marchioness of Sligo and Lord Stowell afterwards, for a short time, inhabited, and in which the noble earl died.

If it be admitted generally by naval men, as it probably will, that the three greatest and most distinguished officers of latter times were the Lords Howe, St. Vincent, and Nelson, it may not be out of place, or uninteresting, to add a few words on their distinctive characters and the modes respectively pursued by them in carrying on their professional duties. In the extensive sense of all three

being skilful and accomplished flag-officers, thoroughly experienced in every branch of the service—who, by their superior knowledge, energy, and zeal, in introducing and maintaining good order and discipline in the fleet—may be considered pretty nearly on an equality; and it is perhaps not too much to say, they have done more towards elevating the character of the profession than any or all of their predecessors; perhaps it may also with truth be said, and not without a feeling of regret,

——"Farewell, with them,
The hope of such hereafter"——

Howe unquestionably led the way. He was his own sole instructor in naval matters—not brought up in any particular school—hardly indeed can it be said there was any school in the early part of his career. Whatever he gained, from the various commanders under whom he served, must have been by comparison, observation, and reflection. At that time, there was very little system observed in the navy, and still less of science. Naval tactics, evolutions, and signals were then but feebly creeping into use, in humble imitation of the French, and had made but slow progress—rarely attempted indeed to be carried into practice except by one individual—the talented and unfortunate Kempenfelt, who perished in the Royal George. After him, Howe seriously took them up, and never lost sight of these important objects until he had completed a system which

long bore the name of "Howe's Signals." In the perfecting of this system he was indefatigable—whether on shore or afloat, theoretically or practically this favourite and most useful object was uppermost in his mind. It is scarcely necessary to repeat that Howe was professionally and characteristically bold, cool, and decisive—a thorough seaman in theory and practice—and his knowledge was communicated to officers mostly by mildness, persuasion, and the force of example.

In tactics and in discipline, St. Vincent was a disciple of Howe. In giving his opinion on the expediency of a night action with a superior enemy, the former decided against it, on the ground of being in such a case deprived of the great advantage of Howe's signals. In discipline the scholar may be said to have carried his mode of instruction beyond the master. Where Howe was patient, gentle, indulgent, and kind, by which he won the attachment of both officers and seamen, St. Vincent was rigorous, peremptory, and resolute, rigidly maintaining that the life and soul of naval discipline was obedience—his favourite word was *obedienza*. The one obtained his object by pursuing the *suaviter in modo* —the other by the *fortiter in re*. The mutinous seamen at Portsmouth, but half subdued, were at once completely reduced to order by the kind and gentle treatment of, and the confidence they placed in, Lord Howe. The mutiny in the fleet off Cadiz no sooner sprung up, than it was crushed by the

prompt and vigorous measures of Lord St. Vincent, whose determined and resolute conduct on that occasion, was absolutely necessary to prevent that spirit of insubordination from spreading which had manifested itself in many of the ships employed in blockading a distant and an enemy's port.

These two gallant admirals, pursuing different modes of attaining the same ends, and of very different temperaments, had the greatest [redacted] deference for each other. St. Vincent always [redacted] of Howe in terms of the highest praise and regard. He used to say he was a man of few words, but what he said was always to the purpose, and well worthy to be remembered. The kindly feelings of men towards each other are frequently discovered in trifling incidents or expressions: Lord St. Vincent, on entering the breakfast-room, would often say, "Well, I have got on my blue breeches this cold morning; Lord Howe wore blue breeches, and I love to follow his example even in my dress." On the other hand, St. Vincent was considered by Howe as the first naval officer of his day. In a letter already quoted, he says, "I will only commission you to assure him (Lord St. Vincent) in my behalf, in simple veracity, that his eminent services have not exceeded my expectations."* He was unquestionably a fearless and intelligent commander, bold in design and prompt in

* A beautiful and highly-prized letter was written by Lord Howe to St. Vincent on his victory of 1797, which by some means or other is said to have disappeared from the family papers, to the great regret and annoyance of the surviving connexions.

execution, free in his opinions, generous, and charitable without ostentation; a keen observer of mankind; indulgent to minor offences, severe in those of an aggravated nature. In politics he was a Whig, firmly attached to his party; but his friends always maintained that he never allowed his political feelings to interfere with his professional duties. As an officer his talents were certainly of the highest order, and many eminent commanders were educated and brought forward under his auspices. With all this merit, which public opinion duly appreciated, he is said (by one who knew him well) to have affected, as well when afloat as under circumstances on shore, the character of a blunt tar, obstinate in his resolutions, and rough in the manner of exercising his authority over the officers of his fleet; but notwithstanding this, the features by which he was best known in society was that of a refined courtier, smooth and complimentary in his address. His professional character, however, was steady resolution and firmness of purpose.

The character and conduct of Nelson were widely different from both of the above-mentioned officers. Without being a thorough seaman, he knew well how to stimulate exertions and to animate zeal. He had the peculiar tact to make every officer, from the highest to the lowest, believe that his individual share in any enterprise contributed mainly to its success—thus giving encouragement and inspiring

confidence to each in his own exertions. In the result he was singularly fortunate: where he led all were anxious to follow. Nelson was indeed a being *sui generis*—"none but himself could be his parallel"—and it may be feared he has left few of the same breed behind him. That he had his weak points cannot be denied, but what human being is exempt from them? He has been unjustly compared with an Anthony, ready to sacrifice the world to another Cleopatra—than which nothing can be more incorrect; with one unfortunate exception, which, in a moment of infatuation, has cast an indelible stain on his memory, he never suffered the deplorable influence alluded to in any way to interfere with his professional duties. Whenever such demanded his presence, all pleasures and indulgences gave way; neither these nor the least care of life occupied for a moment a share in his thoughts. A passionate and insatiable love of fame was the 'spur' to Nelson's "noble mind." To be "Crowned with Laurel or covered with Cypress"—"a Peerage or Westminster Abbey"—"Victory or Westminster Abbey"—these were the *words*, the signal for each terrible conflict. He never anticipated defeat, but went into battle with the full conviction he was to conquer or die. The *words* were the ebullition of that feeling, which carried his feeble frame through exertions and energies, that nothing short of his ardent and spiritual nature could have supported.

The strength and elasticity of his mind got complete control over bodily pain and infirmity. These in the scale of human affliction were to him as nothing, when in sight or pursuit of an enemy. An ambitious love of distinction, a thirst for the acquisition of honours, or a glorious death, was the ruling passion, and his destiny led him to experience them all. Conqueror of "a hundred fights," he died at last, as all true heroes would wish to do, in the arms of victory!

Howe, on the contrary, was exempt entirely from ambition of that kind. He was less of an egotist than almost any man in his station of life. The results of his actions were considered by him in no other light than as they affected his country; he speaks only of the duty he owes to his king and his country, and to the good of the naval service. He never appears to think of honours nor to court distinction. The earldom conferred on him was received with indifference; the offer of a marquisate was rejected as coming immediately from the minister, in lieu of an honour promised by his Sovereign; but the Garter he considered as an ostensible mark of the King's approbation, and the Medal and Chain equally so, and therefore felt it due to the royal donor to wear them on all occasions. Thus it also was with Lord St. Vincent's Star of the Bath, which he always wore on his morning as well as on

his evening dress, as an honourable distinction conferred for his services by his Sovereign.

Howe sought for no pension nor any remuneration of a pecuniary nature for his long and meritorious services, and murmured not at those who obtained rewards for deeds far less brilliant than his own. The only complaint he appears ever to have uttered, was on account of the neglect of the Admiralty towards the more humble but not less valuable instruments who had faithfully served under him. Of his military character there never was, nor could there be, but one opinion. His moral conduct through life, his love of truth and sense of justice, were universally admitted; he was generous, humane, kind-hearted, and charitable; always manifesting an eagerness to do good. In politics he was a Tory, but no party-man; a true patriot, he was sensitively alive to the honour of his King and country. In one word, Lord Howe was a man in all the relations of social life,

INTEGER VITÆ SCELERISQUE PURUS.

THE END.

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